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# **JEAN-PAUL SARTRE AND THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION: 1954-1962**

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**JEAN-PAUL SARTRE AND THE  
ALGERIAN REVOLUTION:  
1954-1962**

## **DEDICATION**

To the souls of all the martyred  
Ouled Amrane "Chouhada" who took  
part in the Algerian War (1954-1962)  
especially my father El-Hadi.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First and foremost a special debt of gratitude is owed to my supervisor, Professor Keith G. Robbins, not only for the guidance of my research and his continuous supervision which has enabled me to produce this work, but also for his extensive help since I came to the Department of Modern History which has made it possible for me to submit and resubmit this work. Special thanks are due to him for his help and encouragement which have enabled me to finish in spite of financial difficulties.

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Last and not least, I am grateful to my mother, Touta, not only for her standing by me throughout my life but also for her support and encouragement to finish this work.

## **ABSTRACT**

What follows is a discussion of Jean-Paul Sartre's writings and political activities on the Algerian revolution between 1954 and 1962. In this study, it is stressed that Sartre's political writings are in favour of the struggle of the Algerian people not only because of his general philosophy of life but also because of his idea of freedom for which he had fought since the Second World War. Thus, I discuss, first, how the organized revolution started in November 1, 1954, against the French colonialists and how the French government reacted by transferring power to the military forces in Algeria. Torture and indiscriminate killing were the main policy of the French Army in Algeria. In the course of my examination, I concentrate only on the most important events of the Algerian War. Secondly, I attempt to analyze the development of Sartre's philosophical and political writings to show how he became involved in the Algerian revolution to the danger of his life in the early 1960s.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Algerian War has been the subject of many critical discussions. However, four months after the Geneva agreements had ended French colonialism in Indo-China, the Algerian revolution began on November 1, 1954. This insurrection was to last for seven and a half years, bringing for France the fall of the democratically elected Fourth Republic at the hands of an insubordinate military and provoking the greatest crisis in the French government; and for the Algerians, it was the last and most serious challenge to confront French military power and Nato forces, a struggle which cost the people of Algeria one and a half million martyrs in order to achieve their independence and freedom. Indeed, torturing, shooting people indiscriminately, and burning villages and forests became the norm to the French Army in Algeria. This French savagery and barbarism made the writers of high intellectual standing who were actively involved in the debate over decolonization after the Second World War concern themselves in the Algerian revolution. Among those intellectuals was Jean-Paul Sartre who was committed politically to the struggle of the Algerians. Thus, in the following thesis, I intend to make a contribution towards clarifying Sartre's position on the Algerian revolution. More specifically, I shall attempt to show that Sartre's writings and political activities are in favour of the Algerians.

My purpose is to concentrate on French colonialism in Algeria and on how the FLN (National Liberation Front) reacted to the French government in November 1954, by organizing new military forces against the oppression. In the course of my analysis, I will gradually attempt to offer some explanations and justifications on both sides, and I will suggest briefly some alternative interpretations. The thesis is divided into

four chapters. Chapter One introduces Sartre's philosophical and political thought before and after the Second World War. The following three chapters show how France waged her war in Algeria and discuss the development of Sartre's writings and political activities on the Algerian revolution.

Chapter One presents Sartre's philosophical and political freedom as a starting point of the development of his writings, and discusses how he has been influenced by the Left-wing, particularly his relationship with the Communist Party which vacillates between agreement and disagreement. The essential point to be noted in this chapter is that it was probably Sartre's theory of freedom which led him to become involved in the Algerian War, as will be shown in the following chapters.

Chapter Two is concerned with the outbreak of the Algerian revolution on November 1, 1954, and the aim of the FLN's organization which lay in the independence and liberation of Algeria. The next step of this chapter discusses the attitude of the French intellectuals toward the Algerian War: such as Albert Camus, Francis Jeanson, and Frantz Fanon who were actively and practically involved in the Algerian revolution, and also who were close to Sartre after the Second World War. This may help us to understand how Sartre gradually became involved in the Algerian problem.

Chapter Three deals directly with the torturing, indiscriminate killing, and shooting for "fun" which became normal behaviour for the French Army in Algeria. This point will be discussed in both sections with some evidence from the eye-witnesses of the Algerian War. As Sartre became involved in the Algerian revolution since 1956 the development of his political writings will be examined at length, particularly on torture.

Chapter Four discusses the conflict of the Algerian problem in the period of General De Gaulle's proposal of self-determination for the Algerian people and how his army became opposed to his Algerian policy. The next stage of this chapter is not only concerned with the development of Sartre's writings and political activities related to the Algerian revolution in the 1960s but is also a continuation of his position on the Algerian War stated in the preceding chapters. Finally the list of Sartre's commitments to the struggle of the Algerian people is drawn up in order to assess his political writings which are in favour of the Algerians.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE DISCOVERY OF FREEDOM IN SARTRE'S THOUGHT**

- (a) Sartre's Ontology**
- (b) Sartre's Political Freedom**
- (c) The Left-Wing Influence on Sartre**

Politics, of whatever sort, is action carried out in common by certain men against other men; based on convergences or divergences of interests, relations of solidarity, like those of struggle and of hostility, define a total attitude of man towards man.

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Le Fantôme de Staline". Les Temps Modernes, No.129-31, November-December 1957. p.579.

## INTRODUCTION

The present chapter discusses briefly Sartre's ontology as a starting point of the development of his thought. To analyze Sartre's writings on the Algerian revolution, we felt it necessary to review first Sartre's views on political freedom and how he was influenced by the Left-wing before and after the Second World War. To better understand this attitude we reviewed Sartre's relationship with the French Communist Party which vacillated between agreement and disagreement.

### **(a) SARTRE'S ONTOLOGY**

Before discussing Sartre's ontology it will be useful to take a close look at his life.

Jean-Paul Charles Aymard Sartre was born on June 21, 1905 in Paris. His formal education began in October 1915 in the Lycée Henri-IV in Paris and his teachers reported that he was "excellent in every aspect".[1] In 1924, he entered the École Normale Supérieure where he met many students who became later among the greatest intellectuals in French history, such as Raymond Aron, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Paul Nizan, etc... As Sartre put it later:

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1. Archives of the Lycée Henri IV, 1915-16; cited in Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, "Chronologie", in Jean-Paul Sartre, Oeuvres romanesques, (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), p.xxxviii.

L'École Normale, pour la plupart d'entre nous, pour moi, fut du premier jour, le commencement de l'indépendance. Beaucoup peuvent dire, comme je fais, qu'ils y ont eu quatre ans de bonheur. [2]

In July 1929, Sartre met Simone de Beauvoir in Paris and told her "from now on, I am going to take you under my wing." [3] From then on it was clear to her that "he would never go out of my life again". [4] In February 1931, Sartre finished his 18 months of military service as a meteorologist, and then began to teach philosophy at the lycée in Le Havre. In September 1933, he left for the French Institute in Berlin, where he studied German philosophers, particularly Edmond Husserl and wrote his essay "The Transcendence of the Ego" which appeared in Recherches Philosophiques in 1936. Also he wrote the first part of L'Imagination which appeared later with the second part in 1940. In 1938, Sartre published his novel Nausea which was very well received by the critics, and then he started publishing quite widely and became known not only to French society but also to the world. However, on June 21, 1940, on his thirty-fifth birthday, he found himself a prisoner of war in France where he remained until August 1940, then in Germany (Stalag XIIID, Trier) until March 1941. In October 1941, Sartre returned again to teach philosophy at the Lycée Condorcet, where he was to stay until 1944.

On June 25, 1943, Sartre published his first main work, Being and Nothingness, which classified him as an existentialist philosopher. Indeed

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2. Sartre in his preface to Paul Nizan's Aden-Arabie, (Paris: François Maspero, 1960), pp.21-22.
  3. Simone de Beauvoir, Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter, translated by James Kirkup, (London: Penguin Books, 1963), p.339.
  4. Ibid, p.345.



between the 1940s and the early 1960s, Sartre committed himself in writings and acting according to his theory of freedom, though he is basically a thinker whose novels and plays are essentially different ways of artistically exemplifying a certain type of existentialist thought, as we are going to see in this thesis.

No philosopher in all history has reached as large an audience in his lifetime as Jean-Paul Sartre. Also, he was one of the most versatile minds of our time. Indeed, he is not only a philosopher but also a playwright, novelist, psychologist, journalist, and politician (and an astonishing person). Everybody who has heard of the doctrine of existentialist philosophy will couple it with the name of the French philosopher Sartre, only afterwards he will think about other philosophers. Furthermore, Sartre is a man who lived half his life in the limelight of extreme notoriety. Indeed, he was one of the writers during his lifetime who had been the target of many attacks from terrorists, like André Malraux, De Gaulle's Minister of Culture (1958-1962) as we are going to see later. But what are Sartre's reasons? The reasons: because of his involvement in the Algerian War (1954-1962), as will be seen in detail in the following chapters. But now, I am only concerned with his ontology as a starting point for the development of his thought.

In order to understand Sartre's political freedom, it is first necessary to briefly review Sartre's notion of ontology and how it is related to his thought.

Ontology is defined philosophically as the study of being, that branch of metaphysics which relates to the being or essence of things, or to being in the abstract, and considers questions about what is and what

is not. [5] But from where does the term ontology derive?

Historically the word ontology comes from the Latin term "ontologia" which was coined by scholastic philosophers in the seventeenth century. Some writers use the term interchangeably with metaphysics but others use it as the name of a subdivision of metaphysics. Most philosophers distinguish clearly the term ontology from natural theology. The first user of the term ontology is Christian Wolff (1679-1754), the German rationalist philosopher, who achieved a reputation for his systematic approach to philosophy rather than for any great originality of mind. However, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) discusses the term ontology as a subdivision of metaphysics that included rational psychology, which is differentiated from empirical psychology, what he called "science of God and World". He says that ". . .in ontology I discuss the more general properties of things, the difference between spiritual and material beings".[6] Thus, Kant becomes the most influential user of the term "ontology" after scholastic philosophers. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) does not hesitate to use it in his writings. Certainly Heidegger's ontology is very different from that of the scholastics. His ontology is not deductive or even systematic in form. It proceeds at times by the exegesis of poetry and philosophy. Heidegger treats ontology as the starting point of his main thought. His basic question "why is there something rather than nothing?", because he presupposes that we already know what "being" and "nothing" are. Heidegger is concerned with knowing the nature of being as being. He claims that he returned in philosophy to the old Aristotelian problem of being, and the point is explicitly stated by Jean

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5. A Dictionary of Philosophy, editorial consultant, Antony Fleur (London: Pan Books, 1979), p.255-6.
  6. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, translated by Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1929), p.502.

Wahl in his book A Short History of Existentialism:

Heidegger has declared that he is not a philosopher of existence, but a philosopher of Being, and that his eventual aim is ontological. Heidegger considers the problem of existence solely to introduce us to ontology, because the only form of Being with which we are truly in (contact according) is the being of man.[7]

Now let us see what Sartre's ontology is. Sartre's thought in general and his philosophy in particular are indebted to the projected ontology of Heidegger. Certainly, he has been influenced by his philosophy and Sartre himself is Heidegger's best-known follower. Sartre, also, starts with the problem of Being. His main work, Being and Nothingness (1943) is subtitled "Essay in Phenomenological Ontology". In this essay Sartre attempts to develop an original ontology. He defines ontology as the study: "of the structures of being of the existent taken as a totality." Ontology describes Being itself, the conditions by which "there is" a world, human reality, etc..."metaphysics".[8] Thus, the purpose of Sartre's investigation is to construct an ontology and the description of the being of the world, and of man. Traditionally, the term "metaphysics" also signifies a study of being itself. But Sartre distinguishes ontology from metaphysics by saying that metaphysics is to ontology as history is to sociology. For him, metaphysics is concerned with the question of why there is anything rather than nothing. He claims that he is interested only in the fundamental description of being; by the use of the word "as if":

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7. Jean Wahl, A Short History of Existentialism (New York, Philosophical library, 1949), p. 28.
  8. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, translated by Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen, 1969), p.633.

Ontology will therefore limit itself to declaring that everything takes place as if the in-itself (unconsciousness) in a project to found itself gave itself the modification of the for-itself (consciousness).[9]

However, Sartre interprets his ontology as two modes of being "pour-soi" (for-itself) and "en-soi" (in-itself) (we shall see the explanation of these terms later). In his book A Critique of Jean-Paul Sartre's Ontology, Maurice Natanson points out that Sartre:

...is attempting to cut across the traditional positions of idealism and realism in founding a radically new ontology. He is attempting to determine if phenomenology is competent to resolve the problems of ontology. [10]

For Sartre, ontology searches to determine the nature of being through an investigation of man's being. In his book L'Ontologie de Sartre, Gilbert Varet asserts that: "For Sartre the point of departure is not human reality, or existence, or Bad Faith, or atheism. (But is ontology)".[11] Thus, the term ontology occupies Sartre's novels and books, and his existentialism is the philosophical meaning of the ontology. Sartre's ontology can only furnish a duality of term and of essences, as he writes:

The for-itself without the in-itself...could not exist any more than a colour could exist without form or a sound without pitch and without timbre.[12]

And his duality is not only in favour of the for-itself but also in primacy of the in-itself, as he emphasizes:

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9. Ibid, p.621.

10. Maurice Natanson, A Critique of Jean-Paul Sartre's Ontology (The University of Nebraska, 1951), p.13.

11. Gilbert Varet, L'Ontologie de Sartre (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1949), p.2.

12. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p.621

The ontological problem of knowledge is resolved by the affirmation of the ontological primacy of the in-itself over the for-itself.[13]

Ontology is the main concept in determining the human condition in Sartre's philosophy, and the "search for Being" is the key to the essential problem with which he is concerned in his attempt to formulate a new ontology. In fact, Sartre, like all French philosophers, is Cartesian, he asserts to derive a certain idea of human consciousness as thinking from René Descartes. More specifically, he begins with the Cartesian "Cogito" (I think therefore I am), which is taken to be the root of all judgements and cognitions. Like Descartes, Sartre thinks that we all are aware of our ideas and of the outside world to which these ideas are related. He agrees with Descartes that we know our own mind better than anything else. Indeed in Being and Nothingness, Sartre discusses consciousness as unity, and he attempts to build this consciousness as the unity of "cogito" and the "pre-reflective Cogito" which is known as the basis for the reality of consciousness. Thus, this unity is recognized by Sartre as the ontological sphere of origin of derivative structure of consciousness.[14] However, the "pre-reflective cogito", for Sartre, is primary consciousness. But I am not going to discuss Sartre's argument on the Cartesian "cogito" in more detail as I am primarily concerned in this chapter with his modes of being.

In the introduction to Being and Nothingness (1943), Sartre explains being-for-itself (Être-pour-soi) and being-in-itself (Être-en-soi) and he

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13. Ibid, p.619

14. Ibid, p.xxix

offered a preliminary distinction between them. This distinction is between two beings: the being-for-itself which is the being of consciousness and the being-in-itself which is the being of inanimate (unconsciousness). The for-itself needs the in-itself in order to be complete. But the in-itself does not need the for-itself because this being for Sartre is fullness. Being-in-itself is one mode of being. It exists in itself apart from its presence to consciousness. Whereas, the being-for-itself is human reality and consciousness. Both being-for-itself and consciousness are often used interchangeably with human reality by Sartre. For him, human reality is freedom.

The most important of Sartre's modes of being is the being-for-itself, and the main characteristic of this being is a lack. The for-itself is incomplete. It needs something to complete it. This lack is seen by Sartre from different angles. As consciousness is an emptiness, there is a distance between the for-itself and its object, that is, between thought and its object, and this distance is a gap for Sartre. This gap is responsible for the power that makes the consciousness affirm or deny, that is, accept what is true for its object. Freedom consists in this ability to affirm or deny. Therefore, freedom constitutes the gap between thought and object, which is the core of consciousness. At the centre of the consciousness, both freedom and an emptiness are found.

It seems that these terms (for-itself and in-itself) are borrowed from Hegel who referred to them as "Für-Sich" and "An-Sich". In his book The Phenomenological Movement, Herbert Spiegelberg affirms that:

One might suspect this even more in the case of Sartre's concepts of the in-itself, (En-Soi), the for-itself (Pour-soi), and the in-itself-for-itself (en-soi-pour-soi), which may seem

to be taken immediately from Hegel's system.[15]

Seemingly, Sartre was influenced by Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind, and the dialectic of Master and Slave, which is concerned with the development of self-consciousness. The master is recognized by the slave as a self-conscious human being. As the master is a consciousness, the slave is an unconsciousness. The master is therefore being-for-itself. The slave who works for the master is being-in-itself. However, Sartre's definition of the two modes of being is different from Hegel's. Moreover, Sartre took the term intentionality from Husserl in order to distinguish the for-itself from the in-itself. This intentionality is an essential aspect of consciousness. For Sartre, the distinction of the two beings do not mean their infinite separation. They are in permanent relation with each other and this relation is the most important for their existence.

In addition to being-for-itself and being-in-itself, Sartre also discusses being-for-others (Être-pour-Autrui). He defines being-for-others in two related ways. Firstly, the human being is aware of his own bodily existence as something which is known to other people. Secondly, he is aware of the bodies of other people and of their existence in the world. Moreover, Sartre thinks that we do not only exist for ourselves but we also exist for others. The realization that I am an object of attention for myself-reflective self-awareness cannot be separated from my knowledge that I am an object of attention for others. This object, in Sartre's view, cannot be compared with the being-for-itself. For instance, when I am ashamed of having done something, is a shame of myself before the

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15. H. Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement, Vol.II (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965), p.472.

other. My being-for-myself and my being-for-others are related to each other by means of being-in-itself. For people, I am a physical object in the world. Therefore, for people I am a being-in-itself. For myself I am a being-for-itself. These two modes of being combine to define the third mode which is being-for-others. Thus, being-for-others is an aspect of being in which my self exists outside as an object for others.

For Sartre, the situation of the for-itself means its existence in the world of objects and human beings. Both the objects and human beings constitute the for-itself. In other words, the way of conceiving the objects which are in the world depends originally on the choices and decisions of the individual. Certainly, in Sartre's view, it is the individual's freedom which decides first whether his situation is free or alienated, the fact that the situation which seems as a factor of determination depends on man's freedom, as he affirms:

**...the for-itself is the free foundation of its being; the for-itself is free but in condition, and it is the relation of this condition to freedom that we are trying to define by making clear the meaning of the situation...the for-itself cannot constitute an external limit of its freedom. [16].**

In fact, Sartre's concept of the situation is revealed by the confrontation of the for-itself's freedom with the objects which Sartre terms in Being and Nothingness, as "existent brut". In this confrontation, the objects of the world do not appear to the for-itself as a "datum", as a "pure" in-itself, both are described as an "existent brut", he says that: **"It is only when there is no choice that freedom stops existing."**[17] It should be noted that Sartre maintains the absolute freedom of the for-itself in the source of its situation because the for-itself has originally chosen such choice and it has decided to accomplish a particular project and that the external world becomes a condition to freedom.

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16. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 519.

17. Ibid, p. 544



Sartre's most important factor which constitutes the situation of the for-itself is represented by the existence of the other. In its relations with others, the freedom of the for-itself is not passive, and the for-itself decides according to the project whether the other is subject or object, as Sartre affirms that:

**The for-itself, i.e. man-in rising up, does not merely suffer the other's existence, he is compelled to make the other's existence manifest to himself in the form of a choice. For it is by a choice that he will apprehend the other as The-other-as-subject or as The-other-as-object.[18]**

According to Sartre, the for-itself's relation with others is based on its freedom. To accept passively the other's existence means first of all that the for-itself chooses to be object in its relation with others and this choice is due completely to its decision. However, in his concept of others, Sartre recognizes a limited freedom of the for-itself in the other's freedom. but I am not going to discuss Sartre's being-for-itself and being-for-others in detail as I am only concerned with his freedom.

#### **(b) SARTRE'S POLITICAL FREEDOM**

Now let us discuss Sartre's concept of freedom. To understand Sartre's freedom before and after the Second World War, I shall examine first the source of Sartre's freedom, when it started, from where it derives and what are the reasons for which Sartre experienced it?

Although Sartre did write about his childhood and adolescence in

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18. Ibid, p. 520.

autobiography which comes out later as a book, Les Mots 1964 (Words), there is only a little evidence about his childhood, because this book seems to take his life up only until his early adolescence. From then until his mid-twenties there are only a few fragments of writing (referred to by Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka)\* and some isolated reminiscences of Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

In Words, Sartre could remember that he kept out of school until after the age of ten and he was compelled to live at his grandfather's home (Charles Schweitzer), after his father's early death, together with two women namely Louise, his grandfather's wife, and Anne-Marie, his own mother. Sartre as a boy related to images and words rather than children and things. Thus, he felt that he belonged:

Le moment où il découvre son alterité est le moment où il découvre qu'il n'est pas le personnage principal dans la vie de sa famille...Quand Jean-Paul découvre qu'il compte "pour du beurre", il vit "dans le malaise".[19]

These feelings of uselessness within his family circle are even clearer when Sartre says: "I was nothing: an indelible transparency".[20]

This fact was so important to the child that it was going to affect and influence his whole career and life. Indeed, from the very beginning, Sartre felt that he had no right to exist when he asserted that:

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\* It should be pointed out that Contat and Rybalka have faithfully and painstakingly collected and ordered virtually everything Sartre has written and said from his childhood to adulthood. So, I shall not hesitate to quote from their writings on Sartre in my thesis.

19. Claire Elmquist, "Lucien, Jean-Paul et la mauvaise Foi: Une étude sur Sartre", Orbis litterarum, Vol.XXVI, 1971, p.221.

20. Sartre, Words, translated by Irene Clephane (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1964) p.63.

"Naturally, I see only mists...the crude intuitions of my existence dwell side by side, neither warring nor mingling".[21] In fact, the child-shaping years were spent in a sequestered unreal inner world, entirely cut off from other children. He was, therefore, left with just one solution: writing. At first sight, it seemed to him that writing might help him communicate with people and accordingly it might make him necessary to them. After a long period as a writer, however, Sartre confessed that he had changed, and yet not when he asserted that: "One gets rid of a neurosis, one doesn't get cured of one's self".[22]

Indeed, Words represents his own account of his apprenticeship to the imaginary as a small boy, and of his immersion in an element from which he had never escaped. This book was not meant to reminisce about Sartre's brilliant career but to meditate on the origins of his illusions. As such, it could be considered as a confession and the author's acknowledgement that something had gone wrong rather than a celebration. However, it could be concluded that Words was bad psychotherapy for Sartre. In other words, as Philip Thody put it:

Les Mots was a search for self which became an escape from self into Art, as the source of the writer's neurosis itself became literary.[23]

In their book Sartre, Alexandre Astruc and Michel Contat report these following words of Sartre; he says, referring to this particular period:

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21. Ibid, p.167.

22. Ibid, p.5.

23. Philip Thody, Sartre: A Biographical Introduction (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p.130.

Il y avait dès ce moment-là l'idée de la liberté. D'où elle me vient, je n'en sais rien, parce que ça, c'est certainement une pensée dont j'ai dû parler avec les camarades à la Rochelle mai je me rappelle très bien de longues conversations dans la cour avec Nizan, qui lui, était profondément déterministe à ce moment-là - ensuite il a été dialecticien, c'est différent - et moi je sais que je soutenais la liberté.[24]

And when Michel Contat insisted on knowing the first time that Sartre gives this thought the term "freedom", Sartre replies:

A quel moment ça a eu ce nom-là, je n'en sais rien. Peut-être faut-il quand même que j'aie été en classe de philo, dans ce cas ce serait à Paris; mais certainement je le sentais avant: liberté et responsabilité. Et ce peut-être venu du fait que j'étais solitaire à la Rochelle, c'est à dire repoussé et voulant m'intégrer. Ce qui vient à ce moment-là, si vous voulez, de l'opposition entre mon enfance où je voulais être un écrivain et puis l'adolescence où j'ai connu la contingence, la violence, les choses comme elles sont. Il est vraisemblable que ça a compté.[25]

In the late twenties Sartre was a student at the École Normale Supérieure; as he admitted in an interview some thirty years later, at that time:

I was young, of good family and had the impression that the world could be mine without having to undergo the compulsion of want and work.[26]

Indeed Sartre spent a great deal of his time engaged in political and philosophical debate with his fellow students, and particularly Paul Nizan, with whom he had been at school. Nizan, who was a student at the

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24. Astruc, A. and Contat, M. Sartre (Paris: Gallimand, 1977) p.31.

25. Ibid, p.32.

26. Playboy, interview: Jean-Paul Sartre, Playboy, May, 1965, p.70.

École Normale Supérieure (1924-1929), joined the Communist Party in 1927, became secretary of the editorial committee of the journal Commune (1933-1939) and director of Ce Soir (1937), and finally he left the party in 1939, after the signature of the pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. He was killed in 1940. However, Nizan, in fact, seems to have acted as a sort of intellectual counter-weight to Sartre in that he formulated his own views and attitudes in response to Nizan's more concrete certainties, which later led his relationship with the French Communist Party to vacillate between agreement and disagreement. But Sartre appears to have felt the need to adopt a position on every issue in relation to such definite opinions, though he had some doubts about Nizan's reasons for holding them. As he put it later: "Je détestais qu'il fût de la politique parceque je n'avais pas le besoin d'en faire".[27] Simone de Beauvoir for her part tells us that Sartre at that time:

"was interested in social and political questions; he sympathized with Nizan's position; but as far as he was concerned the main thing was to write and the rest would come later".[28]

It should be noted that what his faithful friend Nizan thought of Sartre's viewpoint was somewhat ruefully recounted by Sartre in 1960, as he asserts that: "Je lui répétais que nous étions libres: il ne répondait pas, mais son mince sourire de coin en disais long".[29]

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27. Sartre in his preface to Paul Nizan's Aden-Arabie p.20.

28. Simone de Beauvoir, Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter, p.342.

29. Sartre in his preface to Paul Nizan's Aden-Arabie, p.20.

However, Sartre refused to back down from this idea, and he would not admit to himself that such personal freedom as he had might result from his particular way of life.

In 1938, Sartre wrote his novel Nausea which plays an important role in the general development of his work. Certainly, Nausea presents a key to his subsequent writings. It is in this novel that the idea of freedom was first deployed. The notion of freedom here is revealed in the way that Sartre employs the word. The most significant examples of its usage are the following: at the beginning of the story, Antoine Roquentin, the hero of Nausea, says he is worried because:

As I was leaving the Hotel Printania to go to the library, I tried to pick up a piece of paper lying on the ground and didn't succeed...Yes, but to tell the whole truth, it made a profound impression on me: it occurred to me that I was no longer free.[30].

Having failed to touch the paper, he said: "I straightened up, empty-handed. I am no longer free, I can no longer do what I want".[31] Towards the end of the novel, Roquentin decided to abandon his projected biography of the Marquis de Rollebon, which has been the chief project in his life. As he declared:

I am free: I haven't a single reason for living left, all the ones I have tried have given way and I can't imagine any more. I am still quite young, I still have enough strength to start again. But what must I start again? Only now do I realize how much, in the midst of my greatest terror and nausea, I had counted on Anny to save me. My past is dead, Monsieur de Rollebon is dead, Anny came back only to take all hope away from me. I am alone in this white street lined

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30. Sartre, Nausea. Translated by Robert Baldick (London: Penguin Books, 1965), p.20.

31. Ibid, p.22.

with gardens. Alone and free. But this freedom is rather like death.[32].

However, Sartre was moving beyond this idea by 1936, when he finished Nausea, as is shown in the last extract cited: "Alone and free. But this freedom is rather like death". This was an alienated freedom which had been achieved by throwing overboard the very aims and responsibilities which could provide the individual with some direction. Moreover, at the end of the novel, Roquentin decides also to turn to Art, though at the beginning of his novel he attacks the use of Art as consolation. He wants to write a "book". He thinks that his act will help him to overcome weaknesses and absurdity, and to achieve freedom in his life. Indeed, Roquentin decides to write in order to justify his own existence. He is not going to write about history as he did before. For him, history discusses what has existed and it is not useful for him any more. He wants to create something above existence, as he claims:

Another kind of book. I don't quite know which kind - but you would have to guess, behind the printed words, behind the pages, something which didn't exist, which was above existence. The sort of story, for example, which could never happen, an adventure. It would have to be beautiful and hard as steel and make people ashamed of their existence.[33].

Sartre might have thought of his next novel - at least when he began writing it - as a direct continuation of his earlier work. Contat and Rybalka cite in their book:

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32. Ibid, p. 223.

33. Ibid, p. 252.

In the next novel Roquentin will discover that he is free, but it will take a great upheaval in the world to let him do it...He imagines him called up and discovering in this break with his past his total and intoxicating freedom...it is nevertheless a profound moral reconstruction of the individual which is involved here, a true resurrection...from nausea to zeal, from suicide to a taste for life, for unique, irreversible, free life.[34]

However, Roquentin as presented in Nausea characterised Sartre's own ideas of this period, not only in his description of the notion of freedom, but also in his decision to write a book which was to become L'Être et le Néant. Certainly, about this project Sartre declares towards the end of his life:

I thought that the aim of literature was to write a book that would reveal to the reader things he had never thought of before. For a long time that was my idea - the idea that I should succeed in saying things about the world, not just what anyone could see of it, but things that I should see. I did not know them yet, but I was going to see them, and they would reveal the world.[35].

Indeed throughout his writings Sartre presents freedom as developing into projects rather than as an achievement. In Being and Nothingness, Sartre's claim for an absolute freedom results to a great extent from his rejection of the existence of God and his focus on the phenomenological aspect of being. The key concept, however, is the idea of freedom that Sartre states in Being and Nothingness:

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34. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, Vol II. Translated by Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1974). pp. 57-8.
  35. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, Translated by Patrick O'Brien (London: André Deutsch and Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), p. 139.



...it is necessary to point to "common sense" that the formula "to be free" does not mean "to obtain what one has wished" but rather "by oneself to determine oneself to wish" (in the broad sense of choosing). In other words success is not important to freedom. The discussion which opposes common sense to philosophers stems here from a misunderstanding: the empirical and popular concept of "freedom" which has been produced by historical, political, and moral circumstances is equivalent to "the ability to obtain the ends chosen". The technical and philosophical concept of freedom, the only one which we are considering here, means only the autonomy of choice.[36]

Mary Warnock in her introduction to Sartre's The Psychology of Imagination (1940), rightly asserts that:

Not only in Being and Nothingness, but even in his later works, he insists that man's freedom to act in the world is a function of his ability to perceive things not only as they are, but as they are not. If man could not, first describe a present given situation both as it is and as it is not; and if he could not, secondly and consequently, envisage a given situation as possibly being otherwise than how it is then he would have no power to intervene in the world to change it...It is thus absolutely appropriate that Sartre's first serious philosophical work should have been concerned with what turns out to be the foundation upon which freedom itself rests.[37]

It should be pointed out that the concept of absolute freedom derives from Sartre's idealism that characterized him since his experiences of childhood. On the subject of this concept Simone de Beauvoir writes her book The Prime of Life referring to Sartre and herself, therefore: "...Our mistake was to assume that freedom of choice and action is a universal..."[38]

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36. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 483.

37. Mary Warnock in her introduction to Sartre's Psychology of Imagination (London: The Philosophical library, 1972), p.xvii.

38. Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life. Translated by Peter Green, (London: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 44.

Sartre's description of absolute freedom developed from 1924 to 1943; since that period he has rejected this freedom, as he explained to Le Nouvel Observateur:

L'autre jour, j'ai la préface que j'avais écrite pour une édition de ces pièces - Les Mouches, Huis Clos - et j'ai été proprement scandaliser. J'avais écrit ceci: "quelles que soient les circonstances, en quelque lieu que ce soit, un homme est toujours libre de choisir s'il sera un traître ou non". Quand j'ai lu cela, je me suis dit: "c'est incroyable: je le pensais vraiment!" j'en ai conclu que dans toute circonstance il y avait toujours un choix possible. C'était faux.[39]

Sartre shows clearly the rejection of the notion of the absolute freedom which was dominating him in the first stage of his thought. The use of the word "scandaleuse" by Sartre is that to express his reaction against his words written earlier. Indeed, the reaction explained how far Sartre's thought has developed after Being and Nothingness (1943). And the most important discussion in Le Nouvel Observateur is based on the rejection of Sartre's concept of absolute freedom, and the evolution of his thought which is based on the limited freedom of the human being, as we shall see later in this section.

Sartre's new concept of freedom after Nausea was developed in his novel, The Age of Reason (1945), the opening volume of his project of the Roads to Freedom.<sup>\*</sup> In the latter novel the notion of freedom is more

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39. Sartre in Le Nouvel Observateur, January 26, 1970.

\* The first two volumes of Les Chemins de la Liberté (Roads to Freedom), L'Age de Raison and Le Suesis, were published in Paris in 1945 and La Mort dans L'âme in 1949. Part of a projected fourth volume, "La Dernière Chance", was published in Les Temps Modernes, Nos. 49 and 50, November and December, 1949. The first three volumes have been translated respectively as: The Age of Reason, The Reprieve, and Iron in the Soul.

developed than in any other work. Indeed one can easily detect that the character of the protagonist in this novel is Sartre himself who is searching for freedom. Through his character Sartre is now clearly envisaging freedom as being concerned with action. Mathieu, the hero of The Age of Reason, has a bourgeois brother, Jacques who is against his acts. Jacques attacks Mathieu's irresponsibility and his selfish view of freedom. However, anticipating the position towards which Sartre was moving, he says that:

"I should myself have thought", said Jacques, "that freedom consisted in frankly confronting situations into which one had deliberately entered, and accepting all one's responsibilities. But that, no doubt, is not your view: you condemn capitalist society, and yet you are an official in that society; you display an abstract sympathy with Communists, but you take care not to commit yourself, you have never voted. You despise the bourgeois class, and yet you are a bourgeois, son and brother of a bourgeois, and you live like a bourgeois".[40]

It should be noted that Sartre, here, is not concerned with moralizing but with describing the ideas of freedom, and also show that the ultimate goal of the hero Mathieu is freedom from responsibility and from the results of his past actions. However, in Nausea, the imagination of Roquentin led him to write a book as he promised at the end of the novel, in order to attain his freedom, and in The Age of Reason, Mathieu, the hero, became aware that he was "free for nothing" through his acts. Thus, it is neither writing a book nor being aware of his condition which helps the character to attain his freedom. But in December 1945, Sartre offered an interview to Paru, and he provided a good account of his intentions in writing Road to Freedom and of the conception that underlies it:

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40. Sartre, The Age of Reason, Translated by Eric Sutton. (London: Penguin Books, 1961), p.107.

Man is free in the fullest and strongest sense. Freedom is not within him like a property of his human essence. He does not exist first, to be free later. He is free for that alone is what he is. There is no distinction between his being and his freedom. But his man who is also condemned to freedom must, however, free himself because he does not immediately recognize himself as free or because he is mistaken about the meaning of freedom. This journey of the free man towards his freedom is the paradox of freedom and is also the theme of my book. It is the story of a deliverance and of a liberation.[41]

Sartre's concern was with the issue of the Road to Freedom in which he traces an evolution of man without social ties finds himself nevertheless linked to others through the reality of a war common to them all. In an interview of 1948, Sartre summed up the position he had held during the Second World War as follows:

It is not a question of knowing what we are free for but what are the roads to freedom. And on this score we agree completely with Hegel, who said, "No one, no man can be free unless all men are free"...Our concrete goal - which is a very up-to-date, contemporary one - is human liberation.[42]

So, in this way Sartre's theory was accommodated to the categorical imperative of the war: the necessity for the individual to commit himself to the struggle against Nazism and Fascism. By striving for the liberation of others, a man was taking possession of his own freedom which would be completely realized only when that of all men was established. Thus, Sartre's emotional commitment to the fight was reinforced and given a conceptual underpinning by the theory of freedom he developed.

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41. Sartre, interview with Paru, Monaco, No. 13, December, 1945.

42. "Jean-Paul Sartre à Berlin: Discussion autour des Mouches". Verger (Baden-Baden), Paris, Vol. 1, No.5, 1948. pp. 109-23. Excerpt in Contat and Rybalka, pp. 199-200.

It should be pointed out that in another significant development Sartre accepts for the first time that his existence cannot be completely independent from other people, and also he realized that he becomes part of a society that is constituted by the inter-relationship of human beings. He assumes that the individual's free actions inevitably affect other people and their situations. In Being and Nothingness, Sartre argues:

...from the moment that I exist I establish a factual limit to the other's freedom. I am this limit, and each of my projects traces the outline of this limit around the other. Charity, laissez-faire, tolerance - even an attitude of abstention - are each one a project of myself which engages me and which engages the other in his acquiescence.[43]

According to Sartre, only freedom can limit itself and man himself as a free being or other free beings can restrict his liberty. Thus, the existence of other people does bring a factual limit to man's freedom. He affirmed that:

...the other's freedom...is the limit of my freedom...It is given to me as a burden which I carry without ever being able to turn back to know it...If there is another...then I have an outside, I have a nature.[44]

In the autumn of 1946, Anti-Semite and Jew appeared by Sartre. In this book, Sartre examines the problem of Anti-Semitism from two different perspectives: firstly, by analyzing the psychology of the individual Jew and Anti-Semite, which is much in the style of his earlier writings. Secondly, by making a new departure in his thought, he analyses socio-economic class. Also, he attempts to reconcile the two approaches in his work. Indeed,

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43. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 409.

44. Ibid, pp.262-3.

Sartre seems to take action as a writer in a sustained way, and it revealed for the first time his deep attachment to the oppressed. Though, Sartre studies Anti-semitism and the Jewish response to it as instances of individual choice, and he uses authenticity and Bad Faith,\* freedom and the situation, as his main analytic categories. However, Sartre describes the psychological motivation of individuals who have chosen to be Anti-semites, which is seen to result from their attitude to freedom. The Anti-semitic, claims Sartre: "fears every kind of solitariness, that of the genius as much as that of the murderer; he is the man of the crowd".[45]

It should be noted that the evolution of the limited freedom is revealed in Sartre's Anti-Semite and Jew, as he emphasized the idea of the limited freedom of the Jewish people:

Only the freedom in question is carefully limited: the Jew is free to do evil, not good, he has only as much free will as is necessary for him to take full responsibility for the crimes of which he is the author, he does not have enough to be able to achieve a reformation. Strange liberty, which instead of preceding and constituting the essence, remains subordinate to it, is only an irrational quality of it, and yet remains liberty.[46]

The Jew's freedom is thus limited by the Anti-semitic: he is free as long as he is engaged with crimes and assumes responsibility for them. As he flees from freedom and responsibility, he believes that he possessed a weak nature by birth. It may fill the absence of freedom he experiences. However, the Jew is not free to act because he cannot change the

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\* Bad Faith, "Mauvaise Foi" is a lie to oneself which is a kind of self-deception. See more information in author's M. Litt. Thesis, Jean-Paul Sartre's Conception of Bad Faith, Department of Philosophy, University of Glasgow, 1985.

45. Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew. Translated by George F. Berker (New York: Schocken Books, 1965). p.22.

46. Ibid, p.39.

judgement of society. Further, the limited freedom of the Jew is developed by Sartre later in Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr (1952). But now I am only concerned with the character of the Anti-Semite as Sartre describes him.

Sartre sums up the character of the Anti-Semite as a man,

**who is afraid. Not of the Jews, to be sure, but of himself, of his own consciousness, of his liberty, of his instincts, of his responsibilities, of solitariness, of change, of society, and of the world - of everything except the Jews.[47]**

Further, he says that the Anti-Semite is: "a murderer", "a coward" and "a malcontent" who chooses "total irresponsibility" and "a Good that is fixed once and for all, beyond question, out of reach".[48] Sartre argues that Anti-Semites form themselves into groups which are no more than mobs in which individuals are not differentiated by functions. What secures them together: "is anger; the collectivity has no other goal than to exercise over certain individuals a diffused repressive sanction".[49]

Here, it seems the individual in Sartre's view, "is drowned in the crowd, and the ways of thinking and reacting of the group are of a purely primitive type".[50] Thus, the individual Anti-Semite disowns responsibility for himself by surrendering himself to the group, which denies any responsibility for its members' actions. As Sartre put it so well:

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47. Ibid, p.53.

48. Ibid, p.53.

49. Ibid, p.30.

50. Ibid, p.30.

**...[the Anti-Semite] who represses and censures his tendency to murder without being able to hold it back, yet who dares to kill only in effigy or protected by the anonymity of the mob...In espousing Anti-semitism, he does not simply adopt an opinion, he chooses himself as a person. He chooses the permanence and impenetrability of stone...He chooses to acquire nothing, to deserve nothing; he assumes that everything is given to him as his birthright - and he is not noble...Anti-Semite is a man who wishes to be pitiless stone, a furious torrent, a devastating thunderbolt - anything except a man.[51]**

Sartre goes further, asserting that Anti-Semitism is a phenomenon of the middle class and not of the working class, and he explains this in terms of the characteristic kinds of thinking of each class which derive directly from their respective economic and social structures. The working class, apparently, as Sartre describes:

**...sees ensembles in terms of economic function. The bourgeoisie, the peasant class, the proletariat - those are the synthetic realities with which it is concerned, and in those complexes it distinguishes secondary synthetic structures - labour unions, employers' associations, trusts, cartels, parties. Thus, the explanations it gives for historical phenomena are found to agree perfectly with the differentiated structure of a society based on division of labour. History, as the working class sees it, is the result of the play of economic organisms and the interaction of synthetic groups.[52]**

It appeared that Sartre sees the working class as people who tend to reject the Anti-Semites' claim in order to represent the "real nation" because such a conception of an undifferentiated society not divided into clearly visible groups would not accord with their way of understanding the world.

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51. Ibid, pp.53-4.

52. Ibid, pp.35-6.



However, this particular aspect of the Jew's limited freedom is developed by Sartre with reference to Genet when he asserts that in Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr: Free to be guilty, Genet is not to be changed.[53]

In Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr, Sartre claims that the limited freedom of Genet is determined by society. Indeed, it is society which obliged Genet to commit crimes and to act. When Genet searched for being, he found himself without property and parents. For Sartre, Genet is a victim in a society which defines being as having, and Genet wants to be, but he must have in order to be. So, Genet has received an inferiority complex from others and his freedom consisted of taking it upon himself. When, therefore, society accused him of being a thief, Genet denied the accusation. An internal voice was shouting inside him confirming that he was not a thief. His wish to be and to be free led him to play the role of a thief. It is this voice which reveals the gap between Genet's acts and intention. However, in the existence of others, this voice disappeared and Genet becomes a thief in spite of his intention and his will, as Sartre states that:

A shy voice still protests within him: he is a stranger to his purpose. But soon the voice dies: the act is so clear so neatly defined that its nature cannot be mistaken. He attempts to go backwards to understand himself but it is too late for he does not find the way to himself.[54]

In his later writings, particularly in the Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960), Sartre becomes more concerned with political freedom because

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53. Sartre, Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr. Translated by Bernard Frechtman (New York: Braziller, 1963), p.25.

54. Ibid, pp.23-4.

he distinguished sharply between three types of freedom. These types are metaphysical freedom, artistic freedom, and social political freedom with which he becomes more concerned in his later writings. In a discussion, "The Flies in Berlin" (1948), Sartre said:

Our concrete goal, which is highly actual and modern, is to liberate man. This has three aspects. First, metaphysical liberation: to make him conscious that he is completely free and that he must fight against everything which contributes to limiting this freedom. Artistic liberation: to further the free man's communication with other men through art and, aided by this, to place them [the communications] in one and the same atmosphere of freedom. Thirdly, political and social freedom: liberation of the oppressed and other men...[55]

For Sartre, man's metaphysical freedom is a necessary condition of his political freedom. Sartre emphasized that in one of his interviews he said: "But what would it mean to liberate a man whose actions were determined? If man were not free, it would not be worth moving a finger for him".[56] Although Sartre is primarily concerned with political and social freedom in his main later work, Critique of Dialectical Reason, he still holds his original phenomenological existentialism.

First let us see what Sartre's metaphysical freedom is, as it is a necessary condition of man's political freedom. In acting, man creates himself as he wants to be, and creates an image of himself as he thinks he should be. Choosing is to affirm the value, for instance, of that which is chosen. According to Sartre, when man chooses, he not only chooses for himself, but for all men and he is responsible not only for himself but for all men. His responsibility is great, since in committing himself he

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55. "Jean-Paul Sartre à Berlin. Discussion autour des Mouches", *Verger* (Baden-Baden) Paris, 1, No. 5 (1948): 109-23.

56. "A la Recherche de l'Existentialisme: M. Jean-Paul Sartre s'explique", interview by Jean Duché, Le Littéraire, April 13, 1946.

commits all of humanity. Responsibility is, therefore, an important and integral part of freedom. To be free is to choose and to be responsible. For Sartre, to claim that God exists is to deny man's absolute freedom. Thus, to say God exists is to limit man's freedom. To say that there is a universal mortality and all men are subjected to it, is to limit one's freedom. But Sartre seems to miss the point when he says that man chooses for the whole human race. I would say that man could not choose for others as every man is required by Sartre to choose for himself. To choose for others is to go against their choice and freedom.

In several of his writings, Sartre writes "existence precedes essence".<sup>[57]</sup> In Existentialism and Humanism, Sartre stresses existence rather than essence. But what does he mean by essence? If by essence one means a universal human nature designed by God prior to man's existence, Sartre would be right in saying existence precedes essence as he rejects the existence of God. Everyman would then be unique and different from others, since there is nothing pre-determined for him that he should become. Man's life depends on him and him alone. He has the free choice to make it significant or not. He is free to make his own nature and create his own values. For Sartre, man must exist first then create his own essence afterwards. Further, man is from the start free. He is born free. Sartre introduced an absolute freedom which is the most fundamental of all human essence.

By rejecting the idea of universal human essence, Sartre arrives at this well known doctrine "existence precedes essence". For Sartre, as seen in the preceding discussion, man has to make his own nature of essence through his own projects, choice, actions, etc...However, Sartre seems to

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57. Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism. Translated by Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 1948), p.28.

reject human essence on one hand and acknowledges it on the other hand - an objection because he does not agree with the traditional view on man's nature, and acknowledgement in the sense that he sees the nature of man as being universal in more than one aspect.

Up to this point, it would be useful to provide a summary of Sartre's view of alienation in order to understand his philosophical and political writings. The alienation which was dominated by Sartre's Being and Nothingness had been developed in the Critique of Dialectical Reason where he exposed the new meaning of this concept:

...l'homme qui regarde son oeuvre, qui s'y reconnaît tout entier, qui, dans le même temps, ne s'y reconnaît pas du tout, qui peut dire à la fois: "je n'ai pas voulu cela" et "je comprends que c'est cela que j'ai fait et que je ne pouvais rien faire d'autre". Disons-nous qu'il s'agit d'une aliénation? Certainement puis qu'il revient à soi comme autre.[58]

It is in the separation of the man from his work, from his act, from his self that Sartre introduced his new notion of alienation. This separation is seen by a feeling of estrangement that the individual, for Sartre, experiences under special conditions towards his act, his labour and his self. For Sartre, alienation is presented by a lack of recognition which separated the labourer from his labour. The worker from his work. The human being from his act. In this case, to feel strange towards one's own labour, to be separated from one's own work is, to be alien to oneself. In Playboy, Sartre, however, emphasized his view on the alienation clearly when he was asked:

It takes a lot to change a destiny. That destiny has got to be intolerable. And when it's tolerable, it's really worse. This is what I call "alienation". In our social order a man is always dominated by material things, and these things are

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58. Sartre, Critique de la Raison Dialectique (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 285.

themselves produced, created and exploited by others. These others do not confront him face to face. No. They impinge on him through the agency of objects.[59]

This notion of alienation has been adopted by Sartre from Marxist theory. Certainly, self-alienation was an important concept in Marx's thought. Marx affirmed that: "The immediate task of philosophy which is in the service of history is to unmask human self-alienation...[60]. The most important concept in Marx's alienation was presented in his first manuscript of Capital, in the section entitled "alienated labour" therefore:

The externalization of the worker in his product means not only that his work becomes an object, an external existence, but also that it exists outside him independently, alien, an autonomous power, opposed to him. The life he has given the object confronts him as hostile and alien.[61]

Thus, the meaning of alienation in Marx's view is externalization. For Marx, externalization is the term which he used for the labour of the labourer which became separated from him, outside him, strange to him, isolated from him, opposed to him, and therefore, alien to him.

It should be noted that the meaning of Sartre's concept of alienation is identical to the one given in Marx's theory, because both ideas implied separation, estrangement, isolation and externalization from one's work, although the use of the terms are different. Moreover, Sartre's concept of alienation before and during the Second World War was concerned with the dimensions of the consciousness, that is, with beings rather than with individuals themselves, as in Marxist theory. Indeed, Sartre's concept of alienation became, after the war, the most important of his political writings.

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59. Playboy interview Jean-Paul Sartre, Playboy, May 1965, p. 72.

60. Karl Marx, Writing of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society. Translated and edited by Lloyd D. (Euston and Kurt, H. Guddat, 1967), p. 251.

61. *Ibid*, p. 290.

The concept of alienation in Sartre's thought had been developed from Being and Nothingness (1943) to Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960). In Being and Nothingness, alienation was expressed by one of the individuals who was in relation with the other, the conflict was particularly between individuals. Also, the alienation was controlled by an individual, as it was represented by the impossibility of the for-itself (consciousness) to recover his being-for-others. In the Critique of Dialectical Reason, Sartre's alienation was expressed by both the individuals and the other, and the conflict was between the individual and matter. Whereas, in Being and Nothingness, Sartre did not offer any solution to the problem of alienation, in the Critique of Dialectical Reason, however, he proposed one which was related to a new mode of existence of individuals.

### **(C) THE LEFT-WING INFLUENCE ON SARTRE.**

Now let us see Sartre's relation with politics which became the most important development in his writings. In addition to philosophy and psychology, politics has also dominated his thought and life, particularly in his later writings and activities. The main political events which have affected Sartre's writings in France between the two World Wars concern the French Communist Party. Sartre's relation with politics, mainly with the Communist Party, developed from the time when he was a student in the École Normale Supérieure (1924-1929). At that time, he had been influenced by most of his friends especially Paul Nizan, a member of the Communist Party. Perhaps, Annie Cohen-Solal is right when she said:

"...The École Normale brought him a feeling of freedom, and euphoric lightness that might be sufficient explanation for everything that happened there".[62]

Indeed, at the beginning of 1930s, Sartre wrote:

a series of events - the advent of Nazism, incidents in China, the Spanish Civil war, the World crisis - came to wake us up; we felt as if the rug was pulled out from under our feet and, suddenly, we found ourselves caught in a big lie. Suddenly, we realised that the first years were in fact only the last years between two wars.[63]

When the French Communist Party started its activities in December, 1920 there were only four workers as members of the directing committee and the main part was represented by intellectuals. In France as a whole the Right-wing was dominant, as Alfred Cobban stated in his book A History of Modern France:

In the feverish dawn of victory after a night of misery and bloodshed, the Right-wing, which had stood for the fight to a finish and total victory, was bound to win.[64]

However, towards 1924, the Left-wing which was represented by the Radicals and the Socialists dominated the country after an election where:

The Cartel des Gauches won 270 seats against 210 to the Bloc National, with about 50 of the Gauche Radicale in the middle, and a flanking group of some 30 Communists. It was not a safe majority but sufficient to enable the Cartel des Gauches to take over the Government.[65]

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62. Annie Cohen-Solal, Sartre: A Life. Translated by the author herself. (London: Heinemann, 1987) p.63.

63. Ibid, pp.125-26.

64. Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France, Vol. 3 (London: Penguin Books, 1961), P. 121.

65. Ibid, p.127.

It should be noted that within the Communist Party, membership declined at the end of the twenties to attain its minimum in 1933, as Daniel Brower pointed out in his book, The New Jacobins: The French Communist Party and the Popular Front (1968):

Membership declined from 50,000 in 1928 to 29,000 in 1933, the lowest in the Party's history. The major Communist newspaper, L'Humanité, was at an all-time low in 1932 and 1933, printing between 100,000 and 110,000 copies on an average per day and actually selling 70,000 to 80,000.[66]

Besides L'Humanité, the most important journals which presented the political ideas of the Communist Party in the twenties and thirties were: Clarté, Bulletin Communiste, Monde, Nouvel Age, Europe, Commune, and Pensée.

According to Daniel Brower, the first positive contact between the Communist Party and other parties of the left was in 1932 when Maurice Thorez\* agreed, as Brower said:

...to initiate discussions with the socialist leaders on the questions of the proletarian unity, in the hopes probably of manoeuvring the Socialist Party into an unfavourable position in the eyes of the workers. But it was the Socialists who outmanoeuvred him.[67]

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\* Maurice Thorez was born in a poor miner's family in the north of France. He joined the Socialist Party in 1919 and the Communist Party in 1920. In 1924 he became a member of the Central Committee, in 1926 a member of the Secretariat Committee and in 1928 the Secretary for the Party's organisation.

66. Daniel Brower, The New Jacobins: The French Communist Party and The Popular Front (Cornell Univ, Press, 1968), p.15.

67. Ibid, p. 22.



However, in 1934 the Communist Party changed its policy and appealed for a united front against fascism. At that time the pact for unity of action was signed between the Communists and the Socialists as Brower affirmed in The New Jacobins:

By July 27, the pact for unity of action was ready to be signed. The Communist Party had agreed to all the major socialist demands. In its final form, the pact provided for a campaign of joint meetings and demonstrations in order to "mobilize" the working population against the fascist organisations". It also called for support of "democratic liberties" and for opposition to "war preparations," the decree-laws and fascist terror in Germany and Austria.[68]

It should be noted that the pact between the Socialists and the Communists was signed on 27 August 1934, and the Amsterdam World Congress was held as a step towards the constitution of the Popular Front. In his book Communism and the French Intellectuals, David Caute claims that out of 2,200 delegates, the Communists were 830, and the Socialists were only 291.[69] Actually, this congress presented the constitution of the Popular Front which is considered to be the first event which attracted Sartre towards politics.

Before discussing Sartre's relationship with politics let us consider the relationship between the Communist Party and the intellectuals. In fact, the Communist Party never recognized the intellectuals for their own originality. It might be understandable when David Caute refers to the underestimation of the intellectuals by Maurice Thorez, the leader of the French Communist Party:

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68. Ibid, p. 65.

69. David Caute, Communism and the French Intellectuals 1914-1960 (London: André Deutsch, 1964), p. 107.

In declaring that the working class alone could guide intellectual movements, Thorez momentarily took theory to an opposite, and absurd, extreme in order to rub in a tactical lesson. Since the working class could directly be identified with the party, the intellectual had to "place himself entirely, without any reserve, in the ideological and political positions of the working class".[70]

Accordingly, we may say that the intellectuals were considered by the Communist Party to be a means in order to attain its goals. Indeed, the party asked for the support of the anti-fascist intellectuals in 1934 when Maurice Thorez was still a General Secretary of the Party and in 1936 when Paul Vaillant-Couturier, a member of the political bureau;

...showered sympathy on the scientists, educators, doctors, artists and writers who were striving to safeguard L'Esprit in a society enslaved by the tyranny of money, assuring them that: "the Communist Party listens to them. It hears them. It understands their fears, it collects them together. It is more than its duty. It is one of the reasons for its existence".[71]

Also in July 1937, Georges Cogniot, a member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, appealed for all intellectuals to join the party.

However, despite the policy of the Communist Party towards the intellectuals, the anti-fascist intellectuals founded the "Association des Écrivains et des Artistes Révolutionnaires" (AEAR) in 1932, with Vaillant-Couturier as General Secretary and with Paul Nizan and André Malraux who later become in De Gaulle's Fifth Republic government Minister of Culture, among the organisation's members. The journal of the

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70. Ibid, p. 114.

71. Ibid, p. 27.

organisation was Commune which appeared for the first time in July 1933. Moreover, another intellectual organisation was founded in 1934, in order to support the Communist Party and the Popular Front, and this organization was "Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Anti-fascistes" (CVIA). This committee was also constituted of writers and artists like Paul Rivet and Paul Langevin.[72] But what is Sartre's attitude towards the French Communist Party?

Sartre's relationship with politics started early in his life when he was a student in the École Normal Supérieure (1924-1929), as we have seen previously. He was more attracted by literature and philosophy than by politics; and his political attitude towards the conflict between the political parties after the First World War was as he stated during an interview with Francis Jeanson:

**Je n'étais pas du tout communiste, et je n'étais pas non plus socialiste: je pensais que certaines réformes pourraient permettre à la société bourgeoise de se maintenir. J'étais plutôt un réformiste.[73]**

Therefore, Sartre's interest in politics was not more than a passive judgement. Certainly, his friendship with Nizan did not affect his political passivity. This friendship helped Sartre to confirm the superiority of his literary writings over any other activities.

It should be noted that Sartre refused to join the Communist Party because of its weakness at that time. In 1934, when the "Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels anti-fascistes" was organized and the pact of action with the Socialists was signed, Sartre was occupied by his literary

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72. Ibid, p. 114.

73. Francis Jeanson, Sartre dans sa Vie (Paris: Le Seuil, 1974) p.294.

and philosophical writings, preparing his essays L'Imagination and writing his novel La Nausée. But he was in favour of the Popular Front, and of any union between the Communist and Socialist parties to fight fascism, though his attitude did not go beyond moral support. In their book, Sartre, Contat and Astruc reported what Sartre thought at that time about his political attitude in 1935:

On était contre la bourgeoisie, on était contre les nazis ou les croix-de-feu...on était sympathisant aux communistes, il n'y a pas l'ombre d'un doute, on ne s'engageait pas, on n'avait pas l'idée de s'engager.[74]

In fact, Sartre was relying on the Popular Front to maintain peace in France and the external world. Although he did not even bother to vote in the election, he was hoping for a Popular Front victory. In a discussion of 1972, Sartre reported that in 1936:

I was entirely favourable to the Popular Front but did not see the need to vote, to give the sense of a decision to my opinion. I felt myself attracted by the crowds which made the Popular Front, but I did not really understand making myself part of them and that my place was in the middle of them. I saw myself as solitary. The positive element in that was an obscure repugnance towards universal suffrage, and the vague idea that a vote could never represent the concrete thought of a man.[75]

However, Sartre's attitudes did not go beyond verbal expressions of friendship. In The Prime of Life, Simone de Beauvoir wrote of Sartre and herself:

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74. Astruc, A. and Contat, M., Sartre, p.45.

75. On a raison de se revolter (Paris: 1974). This is a record of conversation between Sartre, P. Victor and P. Gavi from November 1972 to March 1974 (pp. 23-24).

...our individualism hampered our more progressive instincts, and we still maintained the attitude which had restricted us to the role of witness on 14 July 1935.[76]

The Second World War (1939-1945) is the most important mutation and metamorphosis of Sartre's life as he put it:

"La guerre a vraiment divisé ma vie en deux. Elle a commencé quand j'avais trente - quatre ans, elle s'est terminée quand j'en avais quarante et ça a vraiment été le passage de la jeunesse à l'âge mûr.[77]

Later, Annie Cohen-Solal wrote: "The Sartre of 1945 is no longer the Sartre of 1939".[78] Indeed, the outbreak of war on September 1939, "dramatized for Sartre the precarious nature of his liberty".[79] In the following months, he was captured with 14,000 other French soldiers in the hands of the Germans, and eventually transferred to Stalag XII D at Trier, where he remained as a prisoner of war until 1941, and from where he wrote and acted in a play called Bariona which was committed drama. Bariona is set in Palestine on the even of Jesus' birth, and the hero of the play is the thief of a poverty-stricken village. Later in 1954, Sartre described the feeling of close community induced by the prison camp:

J'ai compris ce que c'était, un soir d'Avril 41: j'avais passé deux mois dans un camp de prisonniers, autant dire dans une boîte à sardines et j'y avais fait l'expérience de la proximité absolue; la frontière de mon espace vital, c'était ma peau; jour et nuit j'avais senti contre moi la chaleur d'une épaule ou d'un flanc. Cela ne gênait pas: les autres, c'était encore moi.[80]

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76. Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life p. 264.
  77. Sartre, Situations, X (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 180.
  78. Annie Cohen-Solal, Sartre: A Life. p. 131.
  79. James D. Wilkinson, The Intellectual Resistance in Europe. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981). p.33.
  80. Sartre, "les Peintures de Giacometti", Les Temps Modernes, No 103, June 1954, p. 2222.

In 1939 Sartre wrote to Simone de Beauvoir and said: "I have never felt such freedom of thought", and explained:

And it is not just because of the war and all it has thrown into question, but because of this little notebook; its free, fragmentary style liberates me from the slavery of previous ideas. I write on the spur of the moment, leaving any conclusions for later.[81]

Several years after Sartre's death, Arlette Elkaim, Sartre's adopted daughter (an Algerian Jew), had published this notebook as The war diaries. In this notebook, Sartre wrote about the major events of his life - his readings, his barrack companions, his experiences at Le Havre, Laon, Berlin, his friendships with women, his unhappy loves, and his relationship with politics - described through the eyes of a soldier.[82] It should be noted that after gaining his release from the prison camp, Sartre claimed that his imprisonment marked "the beginning of my ideological commitment",[83] that is, when he "became conscious of what true freedom is".[84] But how did Sartre become involved in the resistance?

Sartre decided after his imprisonment and release (on pseudo-medical grounds) from prison in 1941, to commit himself politically. Shortly after, he said that we had to unite and to organize a resistance movement against Nazism. As Simone de Beauvoir related this critical event in Sartre's political life in her book The Prime of Life:

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81. Letter to Simone de Beauvoir, October 26, 1939, quoted in Cohen-Solal's Sartre: A Life. p. 140.
  82. Ibid, p. 140.
  83. Sartre par lui-même. Transcript of a film directed by A. Astruc and M. Contat (Paris: Gallimard, 1977). Translated as Sartre by himself, by Richard Seaver. (New York: Urizen Books, 1978). p. 50.
  84. Les Nouvelles littéraires, February 1, 1951.

The first evening he gave me yet another surprise. He had not come back to Paris to enjoy the sweets of freedom, he told me, but to act. How? I inquired, taken aback. We were so isolated, so powerless! It was precisely this isolation that had to be broken down, he said. We had to unite, to organize a resistance movement.[85]

This is the first step which can be seen in Sartre's political life, and which resulted from his imprisonment. Indeed, after his imprisonment Sartre decided for the first time to become personally involved in political activities. He helped the foundation of a small resistance group which was called "Socialism and Liberty", as he reported later: "We founded 'Socialism and Liberty'. I had chosen that title because I thought that socialism or liberty might exist".[86] It seems that the name is significant since it shows that Sartre was now adding concern for the community to his assertion of individual freedom. Simone de Beauvoir writes that reconciling these, "posed vast problems".[87] In 1941, Sartre tried for the first time to contact the Communists who were in the forefront of the resistance at that time, in order to work with them. But the Communists at first rejected his overtures, claiming that he was an agent-provocateur. As he ruefully recounts in his Entretiens Sur la Politique (1949):

I tried a first rapprochement with the communists and they replied to my message "Don't trust Sartre, he had been freed for services rendered to the Germans". He is a spy who comes to get information on the inside workings of the resistance.[88]

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85. Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, p. 264.

86. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p. 392.

87. Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, p. 482.

88. Sartre, Entretiens Sur la Politique, with David Rousset and Gérard Rosenthal (Paris: Gallimard, 1949). p. 71.

In 1943, Sartre was invited by the Communist Party to join the "Comité National des Écrivains" (CNE) with apologies for what had been said earlier. This committee was represented by its journal "Les Lettres Françaises Clandestines". This new political orientation is illustrated in Sartre's first play Les Mouches (1943). The play was written for political reasons, as he explained later:

Après notre défaite de 1940, trop de Français s'abandonnaient au découragement ou laissaient s'installer en eux le remords. J'ai écrit Les Mouches et j'ai essayé de montrer que le remords n'était pas l'attitude que les Français devaient choisir après l'effondrement militaire de notre pays. Notre passé n'était plus. Il avait coulé entre nos mains sans que nous ayons le temps de le saisir, de le tenir sous notre regard pour le comprendre. [89]

From the prison camp, Sartre wrote to Simone de Beauvoir a letter in which he said: "I shall take up politics",[90] and when he returned to Paris he stated that:

I came back to France with the idea that other Frenchmen did not realize all this - that some of them, those who came back from the front and were liberated, realized it, but there was no one to make them decide to resist. That's what seemed to me the first thing to do on coming back to Paris - to create a resistance and thus bring into being a violent movement that would expel Germans.[91]

For Sartre, resistance implied strict and important norms, like secret work and dangerous missions. In May 1944, the "top secret" file that

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89. Sartre, Un Théâtre de Situations. Edited by M. Contat and M. Rybalka (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), p. 228-9.

90. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p. 390.

91. Ibid, p. 390.



arrived at Algiers and later re-appeared among the papers of Georges Andôrd, head of the resistance group, was the only token of Sartre's presence in the underground and the text was titled **"La Résistance: la France et le monde de demain - par un philosophe"**.<sup>[92]</sup> At that period Simone de Beauvoir asserted that André Malraux **"...was relying on Russian tanks and American planes to win the war"**.<sup>[93]</sup> It should be noted that the group of "Socialism and Liberty" was on the side of the Communists during the resistance until the end of the war, though the group attempted to provide a third option between two powerful resistance machines: the Gaullists and the Communists. However, "Socialism and Liberty" was swept away by the active resistance and the members would gradually be absorbed into the ranks of the Communist Party. While Sartre refused to work both with the Communists and the Gaullists.<sup>[94]</sup>

Sartre's work in the resistance and his collaboration with the Communists on "Les lettres Françaises", and in the CNE, has been the subject of many critical discussions. However, he detested the "bourgeoisie" and longed for its overthrow, and opposed fascism and capitalism. While he: **"regarded the working class as pursuing one of the most exemplary forms of human activity"**,<sup>[95]</sup> and he believed, above all, in individual freedom: freedom to be oppositionists in principle, freedom to formulate the aims of his work and life. Man exists first and defines himself afterwards. **"L'homme n'est rien d'autre que ce qu'il se fait"**.<sup>[96]</sup>

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92. Oudard file, French National Archives, quoted in Solal's Sartre: A Life, p. 198.

93. Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, p. 393.

94. Annie Cohen-Solal, Sartre: A Life, pp. 174-175.

95. Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life. p. 94.

96. Sartre, L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme, p. 22.

In 1945, Sartre published his first periodical, Les Temps Modernes which was edited originally by Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Raymond Aron, Michel Leiris, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Albert Ollivier and Jean Paulhan. Sartre declared his main purpose in his first article of this journal, entitled "Présentation": "En résumé, notre intention est de concourir à produire certains changements dans la société qui nous entoure".[97] This was the initial goal for which Les Temps Modernes was initiated. Furthermore, the political writings of the Left-wing writers in Les Temps Modernes were not controlled by its directors. In other words, the journal became politically independent of its directors, Merleau-Ponty who was responsible for the political writing and Sartre who was only the editor of the journal.

Now let us give a birds-eye view of the elections of October 1945 which made the Socialists and Communists meet together two months before the elections in order to consider the possibility of joint action. Though the Communists were interested in this union, the Socialists refused. On October 21, the French voted for a tripartite regime (Tripartism) - the Communists, the Socialists and the "Mouvement Républicain Populaire" (MRP) - the political temporary agreement which ended in May 1947. In the elections the Communists had been given five million votes (approximately 26% of the total cast) and the other two major parties - Socialists and MRP - had four and one half million votes (approximately 24% of the total cast). Thus, the Socialists and Communists together constituted a majority and could have governed together.

In 1947, France began to move further to the right. At that time, the

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97. Sartre, "Présentation", Les Temps Modernes, No. 1, 1945, p.7.

French Government was fighting a war abroad and suffering from inflation at home. The outcome of the tripartite regime was that 20,000 Renault workers went on strike on April 30, 1947 as a protest against the rising cost of living supported by the Communists, though Premier Paul Ramadier (January 21, 1947 - November 19-23, 1947) reorganised his government with a "third force" coalition of Socialists, MRP's and Radicals which ended in May 9. In this difficult political situation, De Gaulle was the first to take advantage and in April 1947, he organized "Rassemblement du Peuple Français" (RPF), trying to bring together all the anti-Communists, including the Radicals who, in fact, joined the Gaullists. The power of the RPF became more remarkable in the municipal elections of October 19 and 25. In his book, Merleau-Ponty, Existentialist of the Social World, Albert Rabil reported the results which made the triumph of De Gaulle's organization:

When the election was finally held, the RPF polled 39 per cent of the vote; the Communists, against whom the whole campaign had been directed, held their own with 31 per cent; the Socialists remained in the running with 19 per cent; and the MRP and the Radicals, received only 9 per cent, being virtually replaced by the RPF.[98]

In October 1947, Premier Paul Ramadier's government suggested to Sartre that he hold a weekly forum on the free radio, helped by his friends of Les Temps Modernes. The first broadcast was entitled "We must campaign against believing that war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. is inevitable", in which Sartre rejected the cold war politics of the two blocs. The second broadcast was entitled "De Gaulle" and "Gaullism" as seen by Jean-Paul Sartre and Les Temps Modernes staff. In his free speech, Sartre denounced his belief in the inevitability of war on which Gaullist

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98. Albert Rabil, Merleau-Ponty, Existentialist of the Social World. (New York: Columbia, U.P., 1967) p. 92.

politics was based. In the course of the discussion, Sartre and his friends said "When one looks at those RPF's posters glaring from every wall of the city",...-Alphonse Bonnafé, Sartre's former colleague and friend from the Lycée at Le Havre, said - "...you know what I am talking about, the huge portrait of the General...the little mustache, the heavy eyelids...not to mention the lock across the forehead...It's all there, I tell you! And the people who pass by say: 'But that's' - "Don't say it!" another panelist interrupted him.[99] Also they compared De Gaulle to Hitler and spoke of De Gaulle's scorn for the masses, but the members of the RPF defended their leader on the radio and in the press:

M. J. P. Sartre is talking about Général De Gaulle in an indecent way, and his comparison of the liberation of our country, the restorer of our freedom and our republic, to Marshal Pétain, not to mention the comparison to Hitler, is impermissible and worthy of public scorn.[100]

Moreover, the Gaullists said about this stormy encounter:

Monsieur Sartre's broadcast about Général De Gaulle was an attack on the probity and the dignity of the spirit...The author constructed a false De Gaulle, which he then compared to Pétain and Hitler; such a thing could only deserve the contempt of the public. Given the circumstances, there was no need for an answer. Such an infamy deserved only silence.[101]

Sartre replied: "A citizen has the right to say what he thinks, always..."[102] However, Sartre's disagreement with De Gaulle's policy will be discussed in chapter four when De Gaulle came to power on the Algerian war.

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99. Unpublished text, Institut National de L'audiovisual (INA) quoted in Solal's Sartre: A Life, p. 296.
100. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 179.
101. L'ordre de Paris, October 24, 1947. Quoted in Solal's Sartre: A Life, p. 296.
102. Ibid, p. 296.

On the other hand, neither had De Gaulle's new organization attained sufficient popularity nor did the Communists succeed in organizing the workers' strike, as Rabil said:

Neither the extreme left nor the extreme right could muster a majority. Consequently in 1948 France settled down under third force rule.[103]

In this political situation, the "Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire" (RDR) was organized in 1948 to unite both right and left. In forming and creating this organization, Sartre was completely separated from the Communist Party which he attacked later in Entretiens Sur la Politique, particularly when he said:

les cellules du Parti Communiste, par exemple, sont rigoureusement isolées les unes des autres, aucune d'elle ne sait ce qui se passe dans les autres. A mon avis, une première tâche est de mettre en contact tous les éléments, c'est-à-dire, ce que nous appelons les sections - entre eux.[104]

One of Sartre's aims was to liberate the workers ideologically from the alienation (the explanation of this term will be given later) which had dominated the workers' life by the organization of a political group. But when this political group failed in 1949, Sartre contacted the Communist Party, because he thought that it was the only political organization which could liberate the workers from their alienation, although the Communist Party was against Les Temps Modernes and insulted Sartre for his own writings. In The French Communist Party Versus the Students, Richard Johnson affirmed this attack:

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103. Albert Rabil, Merleau-Ponty, Existentialist of the Social World p. 104.

104. Sartre, "Entretiens Sur la Politique", Les Temps Modernes, No. 37, September 1948, p. 395.

Jean Kanapa, editor of La Nouvelle Critique and a former student of Sartre, referred to him as a "Fascist abscess" and a "cop-intellectual". Roger Garaudy expressed his disgust over the intellectual fornications of the existentialists. In 1947 Pravda accused Sartre of being "a service executor of a mission entrusted to him by Wall Street".[105]

These attacks made Sartre think about his relations with the party. In fact, Sartre's attitude towards the French Communist Party was vacillating between two attitudes, disagreeing with its policy on one hand, and appealing for its friendship on the other hand. Certainly this was the reason for the Communist Party being against him and considering him a petit-bourgeois intellectual.

Since 1945, Sartre had been attacked by the French Communist Party as an agent of the government and also for his role in the RDR, and when his play Les Mains Sale (1948) (Dirty Hands) appeared, L'Humanité reviewed it as the work of a "nauseating writer" a "scandalmongering playwright" a "hermetic philosopher" third-rate demagogue: such are the stages of M. Sartre's Career".[106] Also, a Russian critic wrote: "For thirty pieces of silver and a mess of American pottage, Jean-Paul Sartre has sold out what remained of his honour and probity".[107] Sartre's Les Mains Sales, the anti-Communist play had been the subject of many critical discussions. However, Sartre claimed that:

My play is not intended as an apologia, but rather as a critical support of the socialist movement, and it exercises its criticism precisely by attacking the Stalinist methods that were then being used.[108]

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105. Richard Johnson, The French Communist Party Versus the Students (New Haven: London: Yale University Press, 1972) p. 11.

106. L'Humanité, April 7, 1948.

107. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, translated by Richard Howard (London: Penguin Books, 1968) p. 161.

108. Sartre, Sartre on Theatre, edited and introduced by Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, translated by Frank Jelinek (London: Quartet Books, 1976), p. 217.

It should be noted that later in 1964 Sartre gave an interview to Paolo Caruso, the Italian translator of the Critique de la Reason Dialectique about Les Mains Sales which remains Sartre's most successful play and which was used as a cold-war weapon. Sartre was greatly irritated of this use, and in 1952 he:

"decided to permit its performance only if the Communist Party in the country where it was to be performed agreed. Dirty Hands was banned, therefore, in Vienna (in 1952 and 1954)..."[109]

Many interviews and comments were made by Sartre and reported by critics and journalists, among them Simone de Beauvoir who understood Sartre's thought. She attempted to make us believe that Les Mains Sales was not intended as a political play at all. She claimed that:

"he had imagined a young Communist, born into the middle classes, seeking to erase his origin by an act, but unable to tear himself away from his subjectivity, even at the price of an assassination; in opposition to him he had created a militant politician utterly devoted to his objectives".[110]

However, Le Mains Sales might be called "peripolitical" as Paolo Caruso put it:

"To be quite accurate, a play about politics...In other words, you cannot be in politics - of any sort - without getting your hands dirty, without being forced to compromise between the ideal and the real".[111]

But let us see some characters of Les Mains Sales, who appeared

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109. Ibid, p. 210.

110. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance. pp. 159-60.

111. Sartre, Sartre on Theatre. p. 207.

to take political action. Hoederer, one of the leaders of the Proletarian Party, who is planning political action which is not in keeping with the party line, and Hugo, young intellectual who has joined the Proletarian Party. Hoederer warns Hugo that it is not enough for him to support the goals of the Communist Party on paper, he must be prepared to get his hands dirty, that is, not to talk, but to act, as Sartre wrote:

Comme tu tiens à ta pureté, mon petit gars! Comme tu as peur de te salir les mains. En bien, reste pur! A qui cela servira-t-il, et pourquoi viens-tu parmi nous? La pureté, c'est une idée de fakir et de moine. Vous autres, les intellectuels, les anarchistes bourgeois, vous en tirez prétexte pour ne rien faire, rester immobile, serrer les coudes contre le corps, porter des gants. Moi j'ai les mains sales. Jusqu'aux coudes. Je les ai plongées dans la merde et dans le sang.[112]

From 1948, trials and conflict concerning Les Mains Sales continued throughout the world until 1956, though Sartre declared that:

I do not disavow Dirty Hands, I only regret the way it was used. My play became a political battlefield, an instrument of political propaganda. Given the tense atmosphere of our time, I don't think that its performance in sensitive spots such as Berlin or Vienna would benefit peace.[113]

The development of Sartre's political writings started to take sides on the early 1950's. For him such

"intellectual games...by pushing things to extremes, revealed to each man the necessity to choose, and the consequences of his choice.[114]

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112. Sartre, Les Mains Sales (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 63.

113. Le Monde, September 25, 1954. Quoted in Solal's Sartre: A Life, p. 338.

114. Sartre, Situations, IV. Translated by Benita Eisler and Maria Jolas as Situations (New York: G. Braziller, 1965), p. 274.



Also, comments made by Sartre and later reported by Simone de Beauvoir: "After ten years of rumination, I had reached breaking point: one light tap was all that was required".[115] This "tap" came after the U.S. General Matthew Ridgeway, former head of command in Korea and promoter of this new form of warfare, arrived in May 1952 to Paris to take up his duties as NATO Commander. On May 28, 1952, a violent anti-Ridgeway demonstrations was organized by the Communists: twenty to thirty thousand people marching illegally through the streets of Paris, accusing him of direct responsibility for practising biological warfare in Korea. The police retaliated with suppression of the riots and arrested Jacques Duclos in his car, the Secretary of the Communist Party.[116]

It should be noted that during these events, Sartre was in Rome and he had learned from the Italian newspapers of Duclos' arrest. He wrote:

In the name of those principles which it had inculcated into me, in the name of its humanism and of its humanities, in the name of liberty, equality, fraternity, I swore to the bourgeoisie a hatred which would only die with me. When I returned precipitately to Paris, I had to write or suffocate. Day and night, I wrote the first part of "Les Communistes et la Paix".[117]

The most important fact to be noted was that when Sartre wrote an article, "Les Communistes et la Paix" in 1952, he attacked the bourgeois government in a way that he did not do before, and he considered the Communist Party the only party suitable for the workers. In this article, Sartre attacked the French government:

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115. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 273.

116. David Caute, Communism and the French intellectuals, 1914-1960, p. 195.

117. Sartre, Between Existentialism and Marxism. Translated by John Mathews. (London: Verso edition, 1983). p. 119.

Mais ce qui semble clair, en tout cas, c'est que le régime démocratique n'est plus aujourd'hui qu'une façade: tout les vrais conflits se déroulent en dehors de lui.[118]

What is more, of this attack he added:

Notre société ne peut justifier la grève sans reconnaître d'abord et hautement qu'elle est une société d'oppression.[119]

Indeed, in "Les Communistes et la Paix", Sartre defended the French Communist Party and the Soviet Union's policy against various accusations made by the right and the non-Communist left. That was the essential political choice in Sartre's view. For him, as he explained later:

it was essential to reject this accusation if one did not wish to find oneself on the side of the Americans. Afterwards, it was shown that the USSR, by behaving in Budapest as Stalin did not behave in 1948, in relation to Yugoslavia, and then by repeating the operation in Czechoslovakia, was acting in the manner of an imperialist power.[120]

In this article, Sartre was concerned to find out the extent to which the Communist Party was the "necessary" expression of the working class and the extent to which it was the "exact" expression of it. Because he acknowledged that the Party represented the will of the majority of the French working class, so, he announced his total agreement with that Party in a specific way, "en raisonnant à partir de mes principes et non des leurs..."[121] Also, he said that Soviet Union desired peace and proved it everyday, and he believed that the Russians could take Europe

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118. Sartre, "Les Communistes et la Paix", Les Temps Modernes, No. 81-86, October-November, 1952, p. 43.

119. Ibid, p.44.

120. Sartre, Between Existentialism and Marxism, p.119.

121. Sartre, "Les Communistes et la Paix", Les Temps Modernes, No. 81-86, October-November, 1952, p. 706.

"in a week" and win a war, despite American bombs.[122] However, through his experience Sartre discovered the class struggle when he said that through Simone de Beauvoir:

"...I discovered the class struggle in that slow dismemberment that tore us away from them (the workers) more and more each day...I believe in it, but I did not imagine that it was total...I discovered it against myself". [123]

As the Korean War angered the Communist intellectuals and enabled them to pose as the champions of peace, Joseph Malik, the Soviet Ambassador to the U.N., reported from New York that the real issue of a Civil War in Korea was American intervention.[124] Further, the intellectual Roger Garaudy quoted from the Korean declaration of October 31st 1949, in Mésaventures de L'anti-Marxisme: "If it is necessary to unify Korea by war, I will make war, but, for that, I will need American aid".[125] But what is Sartre's view on the Korean war?

Sartre's position on the Korean War was that "the revolutionary consciousness of the Korean masses became an objective element in the calculations of the Russian leaders"[126] and also "the Koreans were for themselves the conscious agents of history, and, for the Russians, a tool manoeuvred from outside"[127] that was before the anti-Ridgeway demonstration. At that time Sartre, described himself as being among those "who are neither Communist nor properly speaking Communist sympathizers", because the Communist party was the only major force

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122. Ibid, p. 12.

123. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, pp. 272-3.

124. Le Monde, November 19, 1952.

125. Roger Garaudy, Mésaventures de L'anti-Marxisme.(Paris: Editions sociales, 1956), p. 86.

126. Quoted in Phillip Thody, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Political Study. (NewYork: Macmillan, 1961). p. 186.

127. Ibid, p. 186.

in France opposing the war, not only the Korean war but also the Indo-China war. Sartre, as might be expected, had always felt passionately on colonial questions, as he did in the late 1940's when he accused the Communist Party of opportunism over Indo-China and in the late 1950's over Algeria, as will be discussed in the following chapters. Indeed, Sartre was the first one to condemn the war in Vietnam and he asserted later: "we were the first to condemn Indo-Chinese war, in Les Temps Modernes. We were friends with a number of Vietnamese".[128] Also he believed that:

Hitler had openly proclaimed his deliberate intention of exterminating the Jews. He used genocide as a political means and did not disguise the fact. The Jew had to be put to death wherever he came from...simply because he was Jewish...can we say,...that the American armed forces are killing the Vietnamese for the simple reason that they are Vietnamese?...the structure of war change with the infrastructures of society.[129]

It should be pointed out that Sartre claimed that when he wrote "Les Communistes et la Paix", he did not have any communication with the Communist Party. He acted according to the freedom for which he was fighting, but in October 1952 some Communists had asked Sartre to be a member of the Committee for the liberation of Henri Martin, a Communist sailor, who had been arrested in May 1950 and condemned to five years in prison for his political activities, for passing out peace leaflets against the war in Indo-China.[130] He agreed to attend the meeting and write a book calling for the release of Henri Martin.

Sartre collaborated on a book L’Affaire Henri Martin making the facts of the matter public. Simone de Beauvoir reported during that year:

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128. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p. 397.

129. Sartre, Between Existentialism and Marxism, p. 67.

130. Annie Cohen-Solal, Sartre: A Life, p. 325.

...he (Sartre) was happy that the first step towards a reconciliation had been made. Circumstances had convinced him that the only path still open to the Left was to find a way back to unity of action with the Communist Party.[131]

But the book was not published until July 1953, after Henri Martin's release. The book contained a number of letters and documents of Martin detailing the whole matter, edited and with commentary by Sartre.

In the meeting, Sartre's speech strongly defended Henri Martin's case and he said that Martin was a positive hero, good son, good student, good resistance fighter, good worker, good sailor. Among the letters which had been sent by Martin from Saigon to his parents, he wrote:

My dear Parents,  
We can be proud of today's toll:  
one child dead and one woman wounded, without considering all other bodies we have left in the rice-field...Now that we have killed his child and wounded his wife, our Annamite is certainly going to turn to the Viet Minh, if he isn't already one. This is how we pacify them. Aside from this, peace everywhere. This is all for tonight. Lots of kisses, Henri.[132]

However, Sartre's friendship with the Communist Party was destroyed after the occupation of Budapest by the Soviet Union in 1956. This particular event surprised Sartre, then gradually it transformed his friendship with the Communist Party into hostility. In his article "Le Fantôme de Staline", Sartre affirmed that, referring to the Soviet Union:

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131. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 272.

132. Sartre, L'Affaire Henri Martin, quoted in Cohen-Solal's Sartre: A Life, p. 326.

...quand vous tiriez, dans ces journées d'octobre, quand les chars de l'armée communiste à l'appel d'un chef communiste massacraient des ouvriers communistes, c'était le socialisme lui-même que vos balles et vos obus faisaient voler en éclats.[133]

It should be pointed out that Sartre adopted several positions with respect to Marxism both in his writings and in his politics, that was, from the end of the Second World War until the Soviet intervention in Hungary. At that time Marxism was represented in France by the Communist Party which had its relationship with the Soviet Union. When "les Communistes et la Paix" appeared in 1952, Sartre was not only giving his full support to the politics of the Communist Party but he was defending Marxism. Sartre's discovery of Marxism and the French Communist Party certainly arrived with a vengeance. The development of Sartre's Marxism took a greater depth after 1952. But in this development he did not give such strong support to the French Communist Party. Sartre's approach to Marxism, however, encountered several difficult obstacles. The first obstacle was the Soviet Union which was against Sartre's view of Marxism. The second obstacle was the French Communist Party which followed the ideas of the Soviet Union without developing Marxist theory. The third obstacle was the difficulty of Marxist theory which became an official doctrine in Stalin's view. What can be noted in Sartre's writings from 1945 to 1957 was an effort to find the revolutionary core of Marxism within its Stalinist shell.

For Sartre, Marxism was "an unveiling of being, and at the same time...an unanswered question as to the validity of this unveiling"[134]

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133. Sartre, "Le Fantôme de Staline", Les Temps Modernes, No. 129-31, November-December, 1957, p. 594.

134. Sartre, Critique of Dialectical Reason. Translated by Alan Sheridan Smith (London: New Left Books, 1976), p. 19.

Marxism organized the priority of being beyond knowledge without pointing out the nature of this knowledge. In the post-war popularity of existentialism and Marxism, Sartre reduced his view on human freedom. He quoted from Capital by Marx in order to consolidate his position: This reign of freedom cannot be until there is an end to the work imposed by necessity and external finality.[135] Sartre went on:

As soon as there will exist for everyone a margin of real freedom beyond the production of life, Marxism will have lived out its span; a philosophy of freedom will take its place. But we have no means, no intellectual instrument, no concrete experience which allows us to conceive of this freedom or of this philosophy.[136]

In his book, Marx's Concept of Man, Erich Fromm claimed that Marx's thought is "a spiritual existentialism in secular language", and also he pointed out that "Marx is primarily concerned with the emancipation of man as an individual, the overcoming of alienation, the restoration of his capacity to relate himself fully to man and to nature".[137] Sartre considered existentialism as the contributing ideology and Marxism as the philosophy which we cannot go beyond. Marxism was now "the philosophy of our time"[138] whereas existentialism was only an external "ideology" that was useful only because of the failure of Marxism to develop properly as an intellectual system. Does this explain why many writers claim that Sartre was trying to reconcile Marxism with existentialism? If the two modes of thought were united in experience,

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135. Sartre, The Problem of Method. Translated by Hazel E Barnes (London: Methuen, 1963), p.34.

136. Ibid, p. 34.

137. Erich Fromm, Marx's Concept of Men (New York: Ungar, 1961) p.5.

138. Sartre, The Problem of Method, p. 30.

that meant that the project of reconciliation was possible. Sartre claimed that existentialism can be reconciled with historical materialism but is irreconcilable with dialectical materialism. Moreover, he considered the Marxists, who criticized his existentialism comparing it to an ideology of "petit bourgeois" as philosophers of dialectical materialism. Thereby, Sartre believed in the possibility of reconciling his existentialism with Marx's theory of historical materialism. Although, Sartre claimed to be a Marxist in his social thought he borrowed the materialist conception of history from Marx and rejected dialectical materialism. Then, he explained the Marxist philosophy as historical materialism. In fact, materialism for Marx was based on the consideration of the practice of the individual to be not only determined by circumstances but also to have the possibility to change these circumstances.

For Sartre, Marxism is a way of understanding the objective dimension of human history from the perspective of the results of human action. Existentialism is a way of understanding the subjective individual lived experience within the general framework that Marxism provides. As he put it "We were convinced".[139] Also Sartre emphasized that:

**At one and the same time that historical materialism furnished the only valid interpretation of history and that existentialism remained the only concrete approach to reality.[140]**

In his article "History and Existentialism in Sartre", Leonard Krieger pointed out that Sartre did not always have a historical method, that certainly his first writings deliberately repudiate the possibility of acquiring a certain type of knowledge to be a historian. This was an important

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139. Ibid. p. 21.

140. Ibid, pp 21-64.



subject of Sartre's first work Nausea where the amateur historian protagonist found that "Every existing thing is born without reason, prolongs itself out of weakness and dies by chance". This historian seeks a meaning which does not exist, he imposes one of his own. According to Krieger, Sartre adopted this view:

Sartre's immediate response to the opacity of existence was aesthetic. The note of hope on which La Nausée ends, holds forth the prospect of escaping "the sin of existence" not by penetrating it but by going "behind" it and "above" it to create an intangible something to which existence refers but which itself has being, duration, and therefore no existence. This something, exemplified in La Nausée by a tune and a novel, is generalized in L'Imaginaire into any work of Art.[141]

The experience of the Second World War had a fundamental importance for Sartre. Immediately after this War, Sartre abandoned what he called abstract philosophical contemplation, and he claimed that:

It was the war which shattered the worn structures of our thought - war, occupation, resistance, the years which followed. We wanted to fight at the side of the working-class; we finally understood that the concrete is history.[142]

Therefore, on these counts the experience of this war gave to Sartre a new understanding of history as real and knowable, and of groups of solidarity. In Force of Circumstance, Simone de Beauvoir emphasized that: "The war had effected a decisive conversion...First of all, it had shown him his own historicity".[143] Whereas, Sartre wrote towards the close of the war:

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141. Leonard Krieger in Wolff Kurt, H. and Barrington, Moore, The Critical Spirit: Essays in Honor of Herbert Marcuse (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 246.

142. Sartre, The Problem of Method, pp. 20-1.

143. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, pp. 12-13.

Jamais nous n'avons été plus libres que sous l'occupation allemand. Nous avons perdu tous nos droits et d'abord celui de parler;...Et le choix que chacun faisait de lui-même était authentique puisqu'il se faisait en présence de la mort,...Ansi, dans l'ombre et dans le sang, la plus forte des Républiques s'est constituée. Chacun de ses citoyens savait qu'il se devait à tous et qu'il ne pouvait compter que sur lui - même; chacun d'eux réalisait, dans le délaissement le plus total, son rôle historique. Chacun d'eux, contre les oppresseurs, entreprenait d'être lui-même dans sa liberté, choisissait la liberté de tous.[144]

Moreover, by the late fifties he stated that:

Thus the plurality of the meaning of history can be discovered and posited for itself only upon the ground of a future totalization - in terms of the future totalization and in contradiction with it. All is obscure, and yet everything is full light. To tackle the theoretical aspect, we have the instruments; we can establish the method. Our historical task, at the heart of this polyvalent world, is to bring closer the moment when history will have only one meaning, when it tends to be dissolved in the concrete men who will make it in common.[145]

It should be noted that Sartre was clear and honest when he said that he did not fully understand history. But he had found a method by which it could be understood. Apparently, understanding history does not imply that the historian has got power to influence history. His understanding could simply be his own powerlessness and alienation that is, brilliant in theory but impotent in action.

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144. Sartre, Situations, III (Paris: Gallimard, 1949) p. 11, 12, 14.

145. Sartre, The Problem of Method, p. 90.

From now on, the investigation of the character of man in society and political action were to be one of his interests, as Sartre later realized: "For revolution is not a state of a soul. It is a daily practice illuminated by a theory".[146] This assertion was made manifest as early as 1945, with the publication of Les Temps Modernes which supported anti-colonialist such struggles as the struggle of the Vietminh and Algeria.

Therefore, as the Algerian revolution which started late in 1954 began to demonstrate its seriousness, Sartre found himself facing a new difficult political situation, as he had a dual obligation: obligation towards his nation (France) and the obligation imposed by his position in the Left-wing, and on his theory of freedom. On the one hand, as a theoretician, he had to comprehend the historical structure of the conflict. On the other, as an activist, he was to become engaged in contributing to a form of revolution which would make the outcome of the struggle a political success for the peoples of both Algeria and France. Basically, these two commitments were aspects of one another. But later Sartre declared that he was free to say "yes" or "no" and he always felt free to agree or refuse. In his interview with Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre said:

Take my attitude during the Algerian war...That was the time at which I separated myself from the Communist Party because the party and we did not want exactly the same thing. The party did envisage the independence of Algeria but only as one possibility among others, whereas we agreed with the FLN\* in calling for that independence in the immediate future.[147]

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\* FLN: le Front de libération National. The Party of the nationalist revolutionary struggle formed on November 1, 1954. It became the only political party which ruled Algerian people after independence. (We shall see more information about this party in the following chapters).

146. Sartre, Situations (IV). Translated by Benita Eisler and Maria Jolas as Situations, (New York: G. Braziller, 1965), p. 177.

147. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p. 367.

Furthermore, French intellectuals were engaged in a debate over the nature and function of the intellectual in modern society. These anti-colonialist intellectuals are Jean-Marie Domenach, Claude Bourdet, François Mauriac, Albert Camus, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, Francis Jeanson and his wife Colette Jeanson and Frantz Fanon.[148] Further, details of these intellectuals will be given in the next chapters as they are referred to. Their opinions were expressed in prestigious non-communist periodicals that usually published anti-colonialist writings; like Les Temps Modernes, Esprit, France-Observateur, and L'Express. Among these intellectuals there was Sartre who was wholeheartedly with the Algerian people, as he claimed later in his interview in Playboy:

I'm an intellectual, not a politician. But as a citizen, I can join pressure group. That explains why I was wholeheartedly with the Algerians. These are the duties of a citizen. Since my skills are intellectual, I can serve as a citizen by writing.[149]

Sartre must set no limits within himself, and also he must let no limits be set for him. Moreover, Sartre thinks that:

"La Vérité reste toujours à trouver, parce qu'elle est infinie...la Vérité entière...est atteignable - encore que personne ne soit capable, aujourd'hui, de l'atteindre".[150]

However, the role of the French intellectuals particularly Sartre towards the Algerian revolution will be discussed at length in the following chapters.

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148. Paul Clay Sorum, Intellectuals and Decolonization in France, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina. 1977, p. xii.

149. Playboy, interview Jean-Paul Sartre, Playboy, May, 1965, p. 74.

150. Sartre, Situations X, (Paris: Galimard, 1976), pp. 148-9.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE OUTBREAK OF THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION ON NOVEMBER 1, 1954 AND THE FRENCH INTELLECTUALS**

- (a) The emergence of the FLN on November 1, 1954 in Algeria.
- (b) The aim of the FLN.
- (c) The attitude of the French intellectuals toward the Algerian War.

The essential is not what others have made of man, but what he has made from what others made of him...

Our age will be an object for those future eyes whose gaze haunts us. And a guilty object. They will reveal to us our failure and guilt. Our age, which is already dead, already a thing, though we still have to live it, is alone in history, and this historical solitude determines even our perceptions; what we see will no longer be; people will laugh at our ignorance, will be indignant at our mistakes. What course is open to us?

Jean-Paul Sartre, Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr.

Translated by Bernard Frechtman.

(New York: G. Braziller, 1963).

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I shall attempt to discuss the outbreak of the Algerian revolution on November 1, 1954. I will examine especially, in the light of the emergence of the FLN in Algeria, how the organized revolution began, and also, the aim of the new organization. I shall also examine how the French administration reacted to the Algerian revolution.

In order to understand the emergence, and the aim of the FLN, it is first necessary to review briefly the events of 8 May 1945 and how they indirectly related to the November uprising. The next step will be to look at the attitude of the French intellectuals toward the Algerian War, as this may help us to understand how Sartre gradually became involved in the Algerian problem. As the whole thesis is devoted to investigating Sartre's political writings on the Algerian War, it will be useful to examine only the intellectuals who were close to him, Albert Camus, Francis Jeanson, Frantz Fanon and also who were actively and practically involved in the Algerian revolution.

### **(a) THE EMERGENCE OF THE FLN ON NOVEMBER 1, 1954 IN ALGERIA.**

Before discussing the emergence of the FLN in the Algerian revolution it will be worthwhile to give a birds-eye view of the events of 8 May, 1945 as a background to All Saints' Day, 1954.

When the French invasion of Algeria on 5 July 1830, settlement, and integration were celebrated, it was assumed that Algeria no longer had any life apart from France. By the turn of the century, the number of Europeans was about 1,200,000, including the Jewish community of

140,000. They had settled there to guarantee that Algeria should remain French and ensure that it should develop along modern western lines. But Algeria had never been entirely peaceful under French rule. However, the first organized and modern political protest against the colonial regime began in the inter-war period among Algerians in Paris. After the Second World War, the Algerian drive toward self-assertion gained momentum, as did nationalist movements elsewhere. The two "founding fathers" of Algerian nationalism were Messali El-Hadj and Ferhat Abbas. First, let us take a close look at both men.

El-Hadj Abdel-Kader (known as Messali El-Hadj) came from a working class family and was by temperament both a mystic and an extremist. A soldier in the First World War and an early member of the French Communist Party, he broke with the Communists later in his political career. In 1930, he attended the Communist International congress in Moscow, then returned to Paris where he founded a nationalist newspaper, El-Ouma (The Nation) which was banned by the French authorities later. He was arrested in 1933, for attempting to reconstitute the banned "Etoile Nord Africaine" (North African Star). In 1935, he founded the "Union Nationale des Musulmans Nord Africains", which in turn was banned in 1937. In 1937, he formed his "Parti du Peuple Algérien" (PAA) (the Algerian Popular Party), and immediately obtained a large following among the poorer Moslems. His victory over Ferhat Abbas at the 1945 congress of the "Les Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté" (AML) (A Moslem integrationist party) founded by Ferhat Abbas in 1944 to change the social and economic situation of the Algerian population was important. The events at Setif in 1945, led to Messali's deportation to Brazzaville where he remained until 1947. Since 1945, he has been an important figure-head in Algerian history.



Ferhat Abbas was born on 24 October 1899 at Tahir in the department of Constantine, son of an influential pro-French Bachagha.\* Abbas went to Algiers to enrol in Algiers University Chemistry School. He was made aware of material French achievements in Algeria and of the modernity of European life. Abbas was first and foremost a professional student politician. He was a good mixer, an excellent debater. On 10 February, 1943, Ferhat Abbas and fifty-five Moslems (lawyers, doctors, teachers and professional politicians) signed the "Manifeste du Peuple Algérien" (MPA). In 1944, Abbas made contact with Messali El-Hadj, himself under house arrest near Algiers, and Abbas announced the creation at Setif of the "Les Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté" (AML) which included Messali and a number of nationalists. Since then Ferhat Abbas has been as important a figure-head in Algerian political history as El-Hadj Messali. In September 1958 Abbas became the first President of the "Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne" (GPRA) in exile (September 1958-August 1961).[1]

The most important event in the development of Algerian nationalism occurred on the morning of 8 May, 1945 in Setif (East of Algeria). The population of this largely Moslem town were preparing for a mass march. It was VE Day, the first day of peace after the Second World War. The demonstrators started walking from the main Mosque at 9.15 a.m., several of them appeared that morning carrying French, British, Russian and American flags, signs reading "down with colonialism", "free Messali" "Vive Messali" (at that time, Messali was packed off into exile to the desert, then

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- \* Bachagha: one who worked for the French administration in Algeria as an intermediary between the European and the native population.
1. Jean Lacouture, Cinq Hommes et la France (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1961), pp. 265-324.

deported to Brazzaville), "we want to be your equals", "for the liberation of the people, long live free and independent Algeria".[2] A group of them carried for the first time the green and white flag which later became the FLN flag. Cheering and shouting, they ran into the police. Then, the demonstrators were shot indiscriminately. By noon the movement had spread to Guelma, Azaba and Kharatta.

The number of the victims in these events has never been accurately given. One could ask how and why the Setif, Guelma, Azaba and Kharatta explosions occurred? They have never been satisfactorily explained by the French authorities. A French investigating committee reported that 103 Europeans were killed, plus another hundred wounded, with a high proportion of officials. According to the official French source the true figure of Algerians killed in these events at Setif, Guelma, Azaba and Kharatta was 1,005. But from private sources, French Army officers with direct experience of the repression suggested about 8,000 Algerians were killed in these villages. Some international reporters like the New York Times, reported the figure of the Algerian victims at between 18,000 and 20,000. While Algerian nationalists themselves claimed that between 45,000 and 50,000 Algerians were killed.[3]

However, the French authorities have never provided the information about the Setif bloodbath, as Simone de Beauvoir recalled: "we heard very little about what had happened at Setif",[4] and L'Humanité, the Communist newspaper, reported only a hundred or so casualties, while

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2. Alistair Horne, A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962 (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 25.
  3. In an interview with Alistair Horne in October 1973, President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia persisted in the belief that "more than 50,000" had been killed after Setif. I have quoted this from Alistair Horne, A Savage War of Peace, p. 27.
  4. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 39.

the Algerian Communist Party (PCA)\* described the uprising as "Hitlerian". Amar Ouzegane, Secretary-General of the Algerian Communist Party, wrote in Liberté, the party journal, "the organisers of these troubles must be swiftly and pitilessly punished, the investigators of the revolts put in front of the firing squad".[5] On the eight day of May, the Algerian liberal leader, Ferhat Abbas was in Algiers to congratulate the Governor-General on the Allied Victory in Europe. He was nevertheless arrested and jailed. In his book The Algerian Problem, Edward Behr affirmed that:

An event which, in one form or another, has marked every Algerian Muslim alive at the time...Everyone of the "new wave" of Algerian nationalists prominent in the National Liberation Front today traces his revolutionary determination back to May 1945...Each of them felt after May 1945 that some sort of armed uprising would sooner or later become necessary.[6]

The French government reacted by making considerable efforts towards a liberal framework for Algeria. In September 1947, the French government founded the Algerian Assembly and the Europeans would control the whole assembly.[7] Further, Algeria remained under the responsibility of the Governor-General which was under the rule of the Interior Minister.

It should be pointed out that the reason for these events of the 8th May 1945, seems to be ignored by Western historians. It was because the French administration took Algerian Moslems to fight beside the French

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- \* PCA: "le Parti Communiste Algérien" (The Algerian Communist Party), composed largely of Algeria's European residents. An adjunct of the French Communist Party, the party was banned after independence.
  - 5. Amar Ouzegane in Liberté, May, 1945.
  - 6. Edward Behr, The Algerian Problem (London: Penguin Books, 1961), p.49.
  - 7. Ibid, 57.

against Germany, and promised the leaders of some parties to give Algeria freedom if France won the war. But all this was forgotten and never mentioned. Furthermore, the Algerians realized the complex of inferiority in which they had lived for more than one century. The French had created the complex of inferiority of the Algerians as the white man had created the "Negro Problem". Let me explain. Before the Second World War, Algerians thought that they were inferior to the European race. After colonizing Algeria the French set about the destruction of everything (books, manuscripts) proving that Algeria has a different culture from France, but not an inferior one. France fuelled the feeling of inferiority by not providing education for the Algerians. At that time people used to accept French rule because they thought the French knew better than they. In 1942, the French took the Algerians to fight with them against Germany. But there, the Algerians experienced not only their equality with the French, but their superiority in some cases. Their experience with the French revealed to them that they could not only fight against them, but also send all the French back to France and liberate Algeria. However, I am not going to discuss the Setif event and the development of Algerian nationalism between 1945 and 1954 in detail as I am primarily concerned with the outbreak of the Algerian rebellion on November 1, 1954.

Now let us give a birds-eye view of the background to the Algerian revolution which started at 1.00 am on November 1, 1954. Conditions in Algeria on the eve of the revolution were highly discriminatory against the Algerian majority. Only about 4% out of the European population were wealthy "colons", (European-Settlers in North of Algeria) while the remainder were urban, middle or lower class or small farmers, the "pied-

noir".\* While 73% of Algerians' land was divided into less than 10 hectares, 80% of colon land was divided into more than 100 hectares (25 hectares is needed, on average, to feed at least one family). Approximately 20% of the Algerian population controlled 65% of its revenue, and the annual per capita income for Europeans in Algeria was almost 28 times that for Algerians. Over 500,000 Algerians, particularly males, worked in the French metropole. Most Algerians, with the exception of a small elite bourgeoisie, were deprived of all opportunity for advancement. One Algerian child out of 10 went to elementary school; all Europeans did. One in 175 Algerians and one in three Europeans went to secondary school (Lycée).[8] Consequently, there were only 99 Algerian doctors, 17 dentists, 44 pharmacists (including Ferhat Abbas), 161 lawyers, and 5 architects in Algeria. Also, out of 25,000 of the French government officials in Algiers, only 183 were Algerians, for the most part Janitors and Night Watchmen.[9]

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\* Pied-noir: as defined by Edmond Jouhaud, this is a term of relatively recent vintage, and first came into use in the Second World War. It designates those early colonists who, while reclaiming marshy land in the Mitidja region (the best land in north of Algeria), burnt the scrub that covered it. Their naked feet were blackened by the cinders. Edmond Jouhaud, Ce que je n'ai pas dit (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1977) p.8.

Pied-noir: small shopowners, artisans, builders, fishermen, miners and low-level civil servants, aided and abetted by sympathizers within the police and the army, would provide grassroots support for the nascent counter pro-FLN groups. Most of them are Alsations. The wealthy "pied-noir" in north Algeria are "colons" (settlers), excluding Jews Community, who taken the best land from the native population. Thus, this community of "pied-noir" later became the base of support for OAS (Organization Secret Army) which we are going to see in the last chapter in detail. However, I have to refer to the European settlers as "pied-noir" in my thesis as described by French and Algerians.

8. Ferhat Abbas, Autopsie d'une Guerre (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1980), pp. 222-3.
9. Ibid, p. 223.

Nine years after the Second World War and the Setif bloodbath and the destruction of France militarily and economically in the war, the country was still in difficulties. Demands for change in both Tunisia and Morocco started early in the 1950s. Also the victory of Indo-China in the capitulation of Dien-Bien-Phu in May 1954, destroyed the French Army psychologically and politically. These reasons led Algerian nationalists to unite into one party and to the emergence of the "Front de Libération Nationale" (FLN) (National Liberation Front) which brought together the whole spectrum of nationalist groups and activities. The new group, named "Comité Révolutionnaire d'Unité et d'Action" (CRUA) (the Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action) was founded in March 1954, by Mohammed Boudiaf, Mustapha Ben-Boulaid, Mourad Didouche, Belkacem Krim, Rabeh Bitat, and Mohammed Larbi Ben-M'hidi. In his book Le Meilleur Combat, Amar Ouzegane (a former Secretary of the Algerian Communist Party) wrote:

Le CRUA a fait table rase du passé, en rompant avec l'idéologie politico-maraboutique du nationalisme conventionnel...Continueur et héritier d'OS,\* nourri de la sève du MTLD\*\*, le CRUA n'est plus le reflet d'une tendance, d'un parti, d'un certain nationalisme, mais l'interprète fidèle d'un patriotisme transcendant, s'identifiant avec l'âme du peuple entier.[10]

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\* OS: "L'Organisation Spéciale". A Moslem paramilitary force that preceded the CRUA, created by Algerian revolutionaries in 1947.

\*\* MTLD: Le Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques. A militant nationalist party organized by Messali in 1946.

10. Amar Ouzegane, Le Meilleur Combat (Paris: Julliard, 1962), p. 158.

The new group CRUA restyled itself and formed the FLN, which took up responsibility for the political direction of the revolution.

Before preceding to action the FLN divided Algeria into six "willaya"\* (zones or sections) and appointed one leader to each "willaya":

Willaya I: Aurès, Mustapha Ben -Boulaïd  
Willaya II: Constantine, Mourad Didouche  
Willaya III: Kabylia, Belkacem Krim  
Willaya IV: Algérois, Rabeh Bitat  
Willaya VI: Sahara (not designated yet)[11]

Mohammed Boudiaf acted as liaison between the internal and external groups. In addition, Ahmed Ben-Bella (who later became, after independence, the President of Algeria [1962-1965], Mohammed Khider and Hocine Ait Ahmed, formed the external delegation in Cairo [Egypt] in order to gain international support for the rebellion. However, these nine leaders were referred to in the period of the revolution and the early years of independence as the "historic nine", the "historic chiefs" or the "nine fathers of the Algerian revolution".

At 1.00am on 1 November, 1954 each leader with his group of rebels attacked French installations, the private property of "grands colons", French military personnel, police headquarters, and Moslem collaborators in different parts of Algeria introduced All Saints' Day. The rebellion launched seventy separate attacks on French posts and other strategic targets throughout the country,[12] but the rebels' main activities were concentrated on the region of the Aurès mountains in the East of

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\* Willaya: each district of operations was called a willaya. The correct transcription should be "wilaya", but the French form has been kept because it is used today by Algerians.

11. Abedlkader Yefsah, Le Processus de Légitimation du Pouvoir Militaire et la Construction de L'Etat en Algérie (Paris: Anthropos, 1982), p.26

12. For an account of this event by a participant, see Mohamed Boudiaf, Où Va L'Algérie, (Paris: Editions librairie de L'Etoile, 1964).

# ATTENTATS HIER A TRAVERS L'ALGERIE

## SEPT MORTS AU TOTAL

Attaque armée à Khenchela contre le poste de police  
Incendies de stock de liège à Azazga et de la coopérative d'agrumes de Boularich  
TROIS BOMBES INCENDIAIRES A RADIO-ALGERIE

## ALGER

★ **républicain** 156

**Envoi de forces de répression dans le Constantinois et les Aurès**  
Arrestations arbitraires dans diverses localités

APRES DEUX MOIS DE VACANCES

### L'Assemblée nationale rentre demain

Le même jour, la commission des Affaires étrangères sera saisie des accords sur le réarmement allemand

QUAND UNE CENTENAIRE RENCONTRE UNE AUTRE CENTENAIRE...



### Un chauffeur de taxi oranais tué par des « clients »

qui disparaissent avec la voiture après avoir joué le corps sur la chaussée

### UNE CHALEUR ÉTOUFFANTE à présider aux fêtes de la Toussaint



### Peu d'espoir de retrouver les 42 passagers du « super-Constellation » disparu au-dessus de l'Atlantique

Le « super-Constellation » disparu au-dessus de l'Atlantique. Les recherches se poursuivent sans espoir de retrouver les 42 passagers.

### Des solutions réelles

Des solutions réelles. Les problèmes de l'Algérie ne peuvent être résolus que par des solutions réelles. Les dirigeants doivent se concentrer sur les problèmes concrets de la population.

### Dernière Minute

Violent engagement près d'Arzis

Violent engagement près d'Arzis. Des combats acharnés ont eu lieu dans la région d'Arzis.

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Des combats acharnés ont eu lieu dans la région d'Arzis.

### 45 MILLIONS D'AMERICAINS VOTENT AUJOURD'HUI

pour désigner 432 députés à la Chambre des représentants, 37 sénateurs et 34 gouverneurs d'Etats

La promesse est légitime en faveur des démocrates

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### HIER APRES-MIDI EN KABYLIE

ALGER-AZAZGA

(De nos correspondants spéciaux M. Zemmouri et A. Benouia)

Alger-Azazga. Hier après-midi, des incidents ont eu lieu dans la région d'Azazga.

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Alger-Azazga. Hier après-midi, des incidents ont eu lieu dans la région d'Azazga.

### Six autres officiers iraniens condamnés à mort hier à Téhéran

M. Hassan Falsafi, dont le pouvoir de cassation a été rejeté par le chah

serait exécuté par pendaison aujourd'hui

Profitez contre les crimes du gouvernement Zadeh

Profitez contre les crimes du gouvernement Zadeh.

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### Un article de M. Maurice THOREZ

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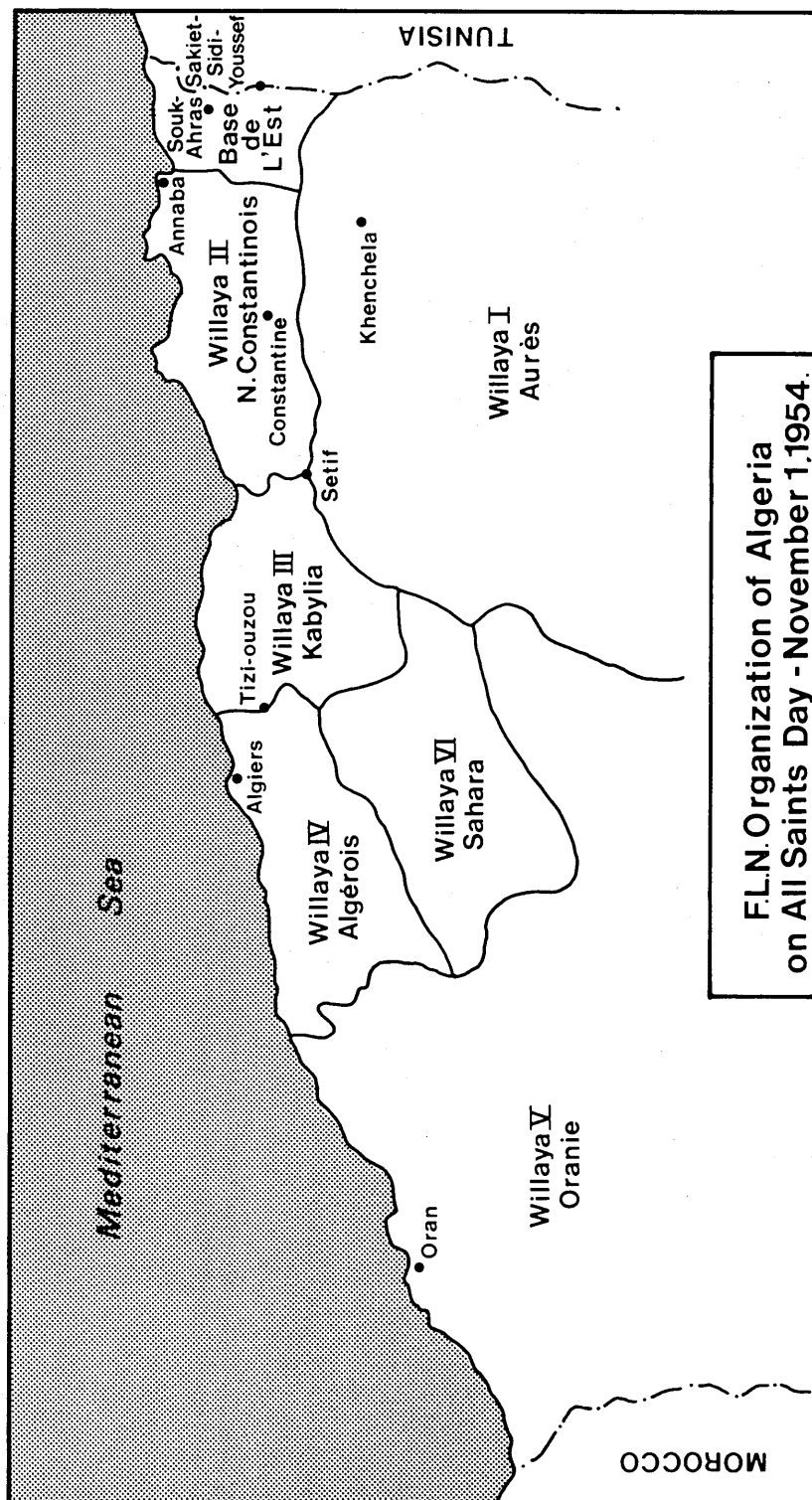
Un article de M. Maurice Thorez.

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Algeria; as René Mayer, deputy of Constantine, reported later, the Aurès was "practically in a state of insurrection".[13] Among these attacks were the seizure of a police barracks in Khenchela and temporary control of several small areas such as Batna and Arris. Also, the explosion of a reservoir of the "Société Algérienne du Pétrole Mory" in Algiers. However, each leader with his group in each "willaya" carried out that night action at the same time, indicating the beginning of revolution. The reasons for starting this action in all the main cities of Algeria were: first, to surprise French authorities by an organized revolution. Second, so that they will not retaliate on one "willaya" or one single city which would facilitate the task for them. Third, to involve all the parts of Algeria in this revolution, and also to get all the organizations influenced by the FLN's goal. Fourth, to mislead the French Army, so that it did not concentrate on one single "willaya" which would destroy the revolution.

At first, the reaction of the French administration seemed to be to ignore the attacks of the FLN on her army bases and strategic targets. Gradually, France recognized the new situation in Algeria had to be faced, that is, the beginning of a general insurrection. The first reaction in France and Algeria was Messali's MTLD, and they had arrested about 160 supporters who had had no part in planning the revolution. But the reactions of the "pied-noir" in Algeria were strongly sharp toward the Algerian Moslems. The Dépêche Quotidienne wrote on November 2:

The evil must be pursued where it is to be found and the ringleaders rooted out where they are...The security measures must be reinforced...[14]

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13. Quoted in Edward Behr, The Algerian Problem, p. 67.
  14. La Dépêche Quotidienne, November, 1954.

It should be pointed out that earlier Chaïly Bert, the "pied-noir" deputy of Algiers, affirmed that:

The natives do not love us, and can never love us. They should not be asked to love us. And I refuse to believe those who pretend that the native feels affection for us. Their association is neither natural nor probable; it is a dangerous illusion that must be carefully avoided.[15]

While Cairo Radio said that: "At one o'clock this morning...Algeria began to live a worthy and honourable life"[16] and also Le Monde had not ignored the action: "Their spontaneity...gives rise to the belief that one is in the presence of a concerted action".[17]

In France, however, the press remained calm. This is, why the revolt in Algeria did not excite any attention among the Republic. L'Humanité "at first reacted by condemning both the adventurism of the attackers and the colonization policies of the government".[18] But the dimensions of the event were appreciated by other intellectuals like François Mauriac who said:

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15. Quoted in Vincent Conifer, France and Algeria, the Problem of Civil and Political Reform (1870-1920). (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966).
  16. Quoted in Edward Behr, The Algerian Problem, p. 67.
  17. Le Monde, November 3, 1954.
  18. L'Humanité, but by November 3, the French Communist Party organ began to denounce cases of torture.

I did not believe that the worst was so close. But my friends know that I am overwhelmed by it. The immediate responsibility of the Fellaghas\* does not in any way attenuate the responsibility that has weighed on us for the last 120 years, a burden that has increased in each generation. The horror of what is about to break out must be completely softened by a concentrated offensive against low salaries, unemployment, ignorance and misery and by the structural reforms the Algerian people are calling for. And, at any cost, the police must be prevented from torturing.[19]

Now let us see how the Pierre Mendès France government reacted. The news could hardly have come at a worse time for it. On November 1, 1954, at 9am Mendès France received a telephone call from François Mitterrand, Minister of the Interior. Mr Mitterrand explained that several dozen terrorist attacks had taken place in Algeria the night before. These attacks were in the three Algerian departments\*\*: their simultaneity and the choice of targets like police stations and French military personnel showed that an ambitious plan was being carried out. Therefore, for Mitterrand, if it was not a general uprising, it was at least a concerted action. Because of his position, the Interior Minister had complete control over Algeria and he warned that France's only negotiation would be war. When Mendès France had originally appointed him as the Interior Minister, Mitterrand said: "I think we should concern ourselves with Algeria immediately if we want to avoid an explosion".[20] Certainly, the response, for Mendès France and Mitterrand, was first of all military (force with force). For the French government, it seemed necessary to react first of all by reaffirming the force of law. During the evening and night of the

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\* Fellaghas: singular of Fellagha, rebel defined by French propaganda as "voyou" who slaughter innocent people.

\*\* French Administration divided Algeria into three parts: department of Algiers, department of Oran, and department of Constantine, while the FLN divided Algeria into six "willaya".

19. François Mauriac, Bloc-Notes, Vol. I. (Paris: Flammarion, 1958), p.133.

20. Franz-Olivier Giesbert, Mitterrand ou la Tentation de L'Histoire (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977), p. 120.

first of November, three companies of "Compagnier Républicaines de Sécurité" (CRS) landed at Oran, Algiers and Constantine. The next day, a battalion of parachute troops was sent to Algeria.[21] On 2 November, the Premier sent this eloquent note to the Cabinet.

First: we must make sure that the troop movements have been carried out. Second: we must at least triple the number of troops and CRS sent to Algeria...we must act on them in the most energetic way so that they do not lose a moment.[22]

On 12 November, in a fighting speech to the National Assembly, Mendès France declared:

One does not compromise when it comes to defending the internal peace of the nation, the unity and the integrity of the Republic. The Algerian departments are part of the French Republic. They have been French for a long time, and they are irrevocably French...Between them and metropolitan France there can be no conceivable secession.

This must be clear once and for all, in Algeria and in metropolitan France as much as in the outside world.

(Applause from left, centre, right and extremist right).  
Never will France - any French government, or parliament, whatever may be their particularistic tendencies - yield on this fundamental principle.

Mesdames, Messieurs, several deputies have made comparisons between French policy in Algeria and Tunisia. I declare that no parallel is more erroneous, that no comparison is false or more dangerous. "L'Algérie, c'est la France".[23]

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21. Jean Lacouture, Pierre Mendès France. Translated by George Holloch (New York, London: Holmes and Meier, 1984), p. 305.
  22. Pierre Rouanet, Mendès France au Pouvoir (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1965). p. 376.
  23. Ibid, pp. 383-4.

In reaction, the spokesmen for colonial interests attacked the Mendès France Cabinet for their policy. It was firstly proclaimed that "liberties are not appropriate for insufficiently evolved peoples", secondly, that "repression comes first", thirdly that "the Fellahs\* want bread, not political rights", fourthly that this was a government of "national surrender". And also the spokesmen agreed that it was the policy of "concessions" in Tunisia for instance, that had "provoked the troubles" and "shattered harmony"[24] in Algeria. However, these criticisms turned into accusation later, when Claude Bourdet published an article in France-Observateur entitled "Votre Gestapo Algérien" (Your Algerian Gestapo), which characterized the method of torture and the frightful conditions in the prisons of Tizi-Ouzou, and Aurès of the Mendès France government. The end of the article was a slap in the face; Bourdet concluded:

Can our statesmen...calmly stand for what is happening? It is the great colonial interests that are giving the orders, but it is M.M. Mendès France and Mitterrand who are responsible before public opinion and before history.

When you allow such crimes to be committed you do not save yourself by saying: "others would do worse".[25]

It should be noted that twenty six years later, Mendès France pointed out:

Unlike what had happened in Tunisia and Morocco, French colonization in Algeria had destroyed the indigenous elites. There was thus no one to negotiate with. What I tried to make people understand was that we had to begin with a

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\* Fellahs: Peasants; most people in Algeria are Fellahs.

24. Jean Lacouture, Pierre Mendès France, p. 307.

25. Claude Bourdet, "Votre Gestapo Algérien", France-Observateur, 13 Janvier, 1955.

procedure that would allow the Algerians to designate spokesmen with whom we could carry on a dialogue. We had to begin with acts under French law: juridically, Algeria was France. We could do nothing but consider it as part of France with which it is necessary to carry on a debate.

But a debate with whom? The 1947 statute, never applied, had created the Algerian Assembly. God knows that it was open to criticism, but it existed. The statute provided for the creation of a sort of government, the Executive Council, made up of three Europeans and three Algerians, and never set up...[26].

Here, Mendès France seemed to present a "new deal" for Algeria because it was clear to him that colonial rule in Algeria would have to end sooner or later, as it was ending in Tunisia, Morocco, and Indo-China. The question was, when? And with whom to negotiate? In Indo-China, Tunisia, and Morocco there had been the leaders who were present in the negotiation (Ho Chi Minh, Habib Bourguiba, and Sultan Sidi-Mohammed). But in Algeria, there was no one to negotiate with according to Mendès France. If negotiation was the key to the Algerian problem in November 1954, why did France not negotiate on May 8, 1945 with the leader of MTLD, Messali El-Hadj? Probably, Mouloud Feraoun, the Algerian liberal writers, is right when he said:

This sad day...For Frenchmen who refuse to understand, for the Algerians who refuse to explain...[27]

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26. Quoted in Jean Lacouture, Pierre Mendès France, p.307.

27. Mouloud Feraoun, Journal, 1955-1962.

## (b) THE AIM OF THE FLN

Now let us see the FLN's initial proclamation. To understand the FLN's aim, it will be better first, to know the proclamation of the FLN which addressed the Algerian people and the militants of the national cause. Indeed, there were many demands in the proclamation of the FLN, but the most important aims could be summed up as goals of independence and the liberation of Algeria.[28]

The FLN rebellion, which the French authorities initially dismissed as a minor affair has a number of elements. First, the FLN as a new organization with its twin aims of liberation and independence had its military component called the "Armée de Libération nationale" (ALN) (National Liberation Army). Second, the FLN's appeal for unity and organization in order to achieve its aims did not succeed because Messali did not join, and the Messalists refused to rally to the FLN. They claimed that the FLN was an organization of political supremacy. Under this situation Messali formed "Le Mouvement National Algérien" (MNA) (Algerian National Movement), to vie with the FLN for control of the nationalist movement. In France, the MNA gained support from the emigrant Algerian workers through its "Union syndicale des Travailleurs Algériens" (USTA) (Union of Algerian Workers). However, the FLN's aims had destroyed Messali's movement, and he himself escaped the country, never to return, and some of his supporters became Harkis (pro-French).\* The FLN also established later a strong organization in France

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28. See more information about the proclamation of the FLN on November 1, 1954 in Ferhat Abbas La Guerre et Révolution d'Algérie (Paris: Julliard, 1962) pp. 220-4.

\* Harki: The Moslem Algerians who supported "L'Algérie Française", and helped the French Army to destroy the FLN's aims.



in order to oppose the activities of MNA. One pro-FLN group in Britain, for instance, continued to refer later to Messali El-Hadj as "...a tragedy of a man passed by history, retreating into bitterness to the counsel of false advisers".[29] The only organizations maintaining friendly neutrality toward the FLN for the first year of the war were the UDMA, the Association of Reformists ULAMA,\* and the Algerian Communist Party.

When it became clear that the FLN was not going to break down under French military forces, both leaders, Ferhat Abbas of UDMA, and Towfik El-Madani of ULAMA went to support the FLN in Cairo later in April, 1956. Despite this show of support, the FLN could not forget the historical mistake of Abbas when he denied the existence of Algeria as a nation earlier in 1936. He said:

If I had discovered the "Algerian Nation", I would be a nationalist...But I will not die for the Algerian fatherland because it does not exist. I have questioned history, the living, and the dead...Nobody spoke to me about it. Of course, I did discover the "Arab empire", the Muslim empire which honoured Islam and our race, but these empires are dead...Therefore we have cast aside all foggy ideas and idle fancies to bind our future definitively to that of French endeavour in this country.[30]

Furthermore, what surprised the French authorities as well as the Algerian people was when he demanded in the Cairo meeting the withdrawal from

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\* **ULAMA:** The religious reformist movement and nationalism. In 1931, the Association of the Reformist ULAMA of Algeria was formed under Abdel-Hamid Ben-Badis. The goal of the nationalist-oriented religious movement was to overcome the degenerative tendencies that had appeared in the Islamic faith.

29. Free Algerian, April 15, 1960, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Published monthly by the British Friends of the Algerian Revolution).

30. Ferhat Abbas, "La France, C'est Moi", L'Entente ("The Assimilationists" journal), Fevrier 23, 1936. Translated by Roger Le Tourneau in Evolution Politique de l'Afrique du Nord Musulmane, (1920-1961) (Paris: Armand Colin, 1962) p. 314.

Algeria of the French Army, a manoeuvre that has been termed "...an act of political artistry that enabled him to survive".[31].

It should be noted that the French administration did not miss the implications of the ULAMA's position when they had warned the French government in Algeria of its importance in 1933. The idea of ULAMA movement had been gaining force in the Moslem world since the early colonial period. In his book Politics in North Africa, Henry Clement Moore affirmed that it:

"...emerged partly in response to the challenge of the West, and as a consequence of the crisis that Islam was experiencing in that century".[32]

Beside UDMA and ULAMA, the Algerian Communist Party had a different political and ideological basis from the FLN. It remained friendly with the FLN and decided to participate in the action against the colonial regime.[33] The leader of the Algerian Communist Party Amar Ouzegane stated that:

The PCA (the Algerian Communist Party) engaged only thirteen combatants for the zone of Algiers, 150-200 for the whole Algerian-Saharan territory, a figure which is a bit meagre for a revolution on the very soil of the fatherland when the same PCA was able - once upon a time - to find two thousand Algerian volunteers to fight in the International Brigade".[34]

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31. Paris, AFP (Broadcast, April 8, 1958, 1729 GMT-E).

32. Henry Clement Moore, Politics in North Africa (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970), p. 322.

33. Henry F. Jackson, The FLN in Algeria: Party Development in a Revolutionary Society, (London: Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 29.

34. Amar Ouzegane, Le Meilleur Combat (Paris: Julliard, 1962), p. 185.

However, like Moslem dissidents, the FLN accepted Communists into the movement individually, not as a party. According to Henri Alleg, editor of the Algerian Communist Party newspaper Alger-Républicain, the Algerian Communists as individuals made a great contribution to the national struggle, particularly with their political writings in the latter newspaper. Indeed Alleg was the one who gave moral support and encouragement to the militants. But the police did not accept the realities of Henri Alleg and banned the newspaper in 1955. Two years later, they threw Alleg into an internment camp. From the prison, he supported the FLN struggle, by writing his famous book La Question (1958) (The Question).[35] (I shall discuss this point in detail in the next chapter).

The strength and unity of the FLN leaders worked to persuade the Algerian masses - sometimes through coercion - to gain greater Moslem popular support for the revolution. FLN-related associations, such as labour unions, student organizations, and women's organizations. The most important of these were "Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens" (UGTA) (the General Union of Algerian Workers) and the "Union Générale des Étudiants Musulmans Algériens" (UGEMA) (the General Union of Algerian Moslem Students). All these organizations had to be under the FLN rule and to recognize the aim of the revolution, the liberation and independence of Algeria.

Gradually, the popular aspects of the FLN's political administration were organized throughout Algeria. Both the ALN and the civilians created a war council, "Le Comité de Coordination et d'Execution" (CCE)\*

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\* CCE: The executive organ of the FLN in war, established by the Soummam Valley Congress in August, 1956. (We shall see more information about this congress in the next chapter).

35. Henri Alleg, La Question (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1958), translated as The Question by John Calder. Preface by Sartre (London: Calder, 1958).

controlled the general direction of this movement which extended down to the Mechta,\* Douar,\*\* village, and the large cities. During 1955-1956, the ALN and the civilian group continued to carry out sporadic sabotage and harassment against French installations like police headquarters and military bases, and attack the European communities, and also Moslem collaborators, who supported "L'Algérie Française". For the second year of the war, these tactics were carried out with a high degree of success.[36] The ALN started with an army numbered in hundreds and poorly armed with hunting rifles and other light weapons. As Ahmed Ben-Bella claimed later, the FLN started the revolt with only 350 to 400 miscellaneous firearms, and virtually nothing heavier than a machine gun. Soon, however, the ALN had developed a disciplined and well-organized force of over 3,000 men. But it was impossible for them to confront the French Army in a direct military action. Their hit-and-run tactics were the most successful way of fighting French colonialism. It should be noted that the FLN's intention was to spread the revolt as soon as possible all over Algeria and gain the support of international public opinion. Indeed, they had to rely on rebellion activities of the ALN first, and second, on the diplomacy of the FLN.

In 1956, the Algerian revolution was greatly supported by most important international developments, which increased its chance of victory. First, the independence of Tunisia and Morocco in March, 1956. In his book Algeria in Turmoil, Michael Clark claimed that Tunisia had

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\* Mechta: A community of people living together in a Douar. A Mechta is a part of a Douar.

\*\* Douar: A part of "Willaya". A Douar is divided into many Mechtas.

36. Neville Barbour, A Survey of Northwest Africa: (Maghrib) (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 234-35.

become, by the end of 1956 as "...a huge drill ground, rest camp and arms depot for rebels".[37] According to Clark, there were about 200,000 Algerians living in Tunisia at this period, over 5,000 were armed and 2,000 were receiving military training.[38] Also, Clark stated later in the New York Times, as a correspondent:

...but for the aid and protection afforded it by Tunisia and Morocco, the rebellion would have been circumscribed and perhaps crushed before the end of 1957. But as the United States learned in Korea, it is singularly difficult to destroy an enemy enjoying the sanctuary of an inviolable frontier.[39]

Second, the revolution was greatly aided by Nasser, the Egyptian President, who supported the FLN since November, 1954. As the arms and funds from Egypt were sent through Libya and Tunisia, Nasser claimed that he would support the Algerian revolution in many ways, including advice on strategy and planning. However, in the support provided by Egypt and some of the Arab countries, the Algerian revolution caused Nasser's seizure of the Suez-Canal in 1956 and castigated the "...obstinate French opposition to the forces of historic change..."[40] as Cairo became the frequent headquarters for Algerian revolution meetings and planning in order to achieve international support, Jacques Soustelle wrote about the two revolutionary forces:

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37. Perhaps Michael K. Clark is right when he says that these figures included the exterior army under Colonel Houari Boumedienne who became later in the independence President of Algeria (1965-1978), which never saw combat during the revolution.
  38. Michael K. Clark, Algeria in Turmoil, (New York, Grosset and Dunlap 1959), p. 353.
  39. Michael K. Clark, New York Times, February 12, 1958.
  40. Resistance Algérienne, August 9, 1956. Edition 5, Number 5. N.P. Organe de Front de Libération Nationale Algérienne pour la défense de L'Algérie du Nord.

Algerian activism and Egyptian expansionism tended to create jealousy and rancour between the veteran Algerian leaders and the ambitious Nasser.[41]

Third, the Algerian revolution became the subject of international interest and concern when the Bandung Conference was held in April 1955. The most important discussion of the Asian-African nations was first to consolidate their non-alignment with the major powers and to state their support for independence movements. Among the points discussed, was the Algerian problem. Prime Minister of India, Nehru made a statement about the right to independence of the Algerian people. Further, the most important support to the history of the FLN's movement was the speech by Premier Chou En-Lai, senior delegate of the People's Republic of China, who asserted that:

...however, we cannot help being aware that the people of...Algeria and other dependent peoples who have been fighting for independence have never ceased to be suppressed with violence.[42]

And also, he declared, China's full sympathy and support to the struggle of the Algerian people for full support.

Fourth, there was increasing international support for the Algerian struggle. On July 29, 1955, Algeria recognized concrete evidence of this support, when delegates from Asia and Africa during the session of the United Nations General Assembly requested the Security Council to place

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41. Jacques Soustelle, Aimée et Souffrante Algérie. I have quoted this translation from Michael Clark, Algeria in Turmoil, p. 96.

42. Survey of China Mainland Press, American Consulate General, Hong Kong, (No. 1031, April 20, 1955), p.3.

the Algerian question on the agenda. Immediately the FLN sent their representatives to the United Nations, Abdel-Kader Chanderli and M'hamed Yazid. Chenderli had fought in the Second World War with the French Army against Germany as other Algerians did. In 1942 he escaped to Britain, joined De Gaulle, fought through Italy and ended the war in Stuttgart. In 1948, he had reported on Palestine for French newspapers and then worked for UNESCO in Montevideo. In 1954, he went to Cairo where he worked as an external delegation for Ahmed Ben-Bella, and he was in charge of arms procurement from Yugoslavia to the FLN. Whereas M'Hamed Yazid had been educated at University in Paris. At that period, he became Secretary-General of the Association of Moslem Students in France. He joined the PPA. In November 1954, he switched to the FLN, and attended the Bandung Conference. Alistair Horne affirmed:

...the FLN at the United Nations...were fortunate in the exceptionally good choice they had made by sending in 1956 their two best-fitted talents to New York: Abdel-kader Chanderli and M'hammed Yazid.[43]

As we have seen the FLN divided Algeria into six "willaya" in order to organize the revolution and to carry out action against French colonialism. The numbers of ALN increased to surprisingly high levels, after the independence of Tunisia and the resettlement of the FLN directorate in Tunisia.[44] The FLN created new "willaya" under the title of "Base de L'Est", close to the Tunisian border in order to supply arms and funds to the other "willayete" (plural of "willaya"), and also to communicate with the external world. In each "willaya", they had military bases, sanctuaries and

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43. Alistair Horne, A Savage War of Peace, p. 244-5.

44. George Armstrong Kelly, Lost Soldiers: The French Army and Empire in Crisis: 1947-1962 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Mit Press, 1965), p. 169.

also they had a sufficiently large area for recruiting.[45] For the first year of the war, the FLN started with 3,000 militants. In 1956, they claimed to have 42,000 men under arms. It could be that the ALN had reached its greatest strength of military effectiveness in Algeria. In his book Les Rebelles Algériens, Serge Bromberger claimed the figures as follows.

Tunisie et la Base de l'Est	8,000
Willaya I Aurès-Nementchas	5,000
Willaya II Nord-Constantinois	5,000
Willaya III Kabylie	8,000
Willaya IV Algérois	7,500
Willaya V Oranie	8,500
	<u>42,000</u> Total

"Willaya" VI Sahara had by this time been suppressed and divided between "willaya" IV Algérois and "willaya" III Kabylie.[46] It appeared that the FLN had by now acquired the ability to influence the population and to create close ties between the civilian and the ALN, and also to mobilize the area of war.

Now let us see how the French administration reacted to the Algerian revolution which had increased gradually since November 1954 and gained international support in the short time. As the Algerian war was officially a "War of reconquest" against the colonialists and imperialists for the Algerians. But for the French authorities, particularly the army, it was the war that, even against the will of God, could not be lost.[47] The French government remarkably increased the forces in order to maintain their slogan: "L'Algérie Française" in reaction to the Algerian military forces,

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45. Otto Heilbrunn, "The Algerian Emergency, 1954-1962", Journal of Royal United Services Institute, 1966, p.231.
  46. Serge Bromberger, Les Rebelles Algériens (Paris: Plon, 1958), p.249.
  47. George Armstrong Kelly, Lost Soldiers: The French Army and Empire in Crisis: 1947-1962, p. 145.



the French had considerably strengthened their forces too, from 50,000 soldiers in 1954 to 200,000 in March 1956, totalling more than 400,000 [48] with the help of NATO, of course. They ruled by decree, in order to bring the ALN under control through military forces.

However, the French authorities claimed that they had killed 36,000 Algerians and lost 4,000 of their own forces in two years.[49] Perhaps, they were right because of their shooting indiscriminately. Indeed the Algerian warriors paid a price for their revolution against the French government. The following quotation clearly states the number of the ALN soldiers who were killed:

At the beginning of the struggle "rebels" were being killed at the rate of 200 per month: in 1956 the figure had reached 1,400 a month, and in the first four months of this year, 2,600 a month. The news last week that 1,000 "rebels" had been killed in two days would indicate that the killing is becoming less discriminating: that all Algerians are being considered as "rebels".[50]

On January 25, 1955, the French administration appointed Jacques Soustelle as Governor-General of Algeria in order to reinforce her policy and to break the deadlock in Algeria, and also to destroy the strength of the FLN. The new Governor-General was designated by Mendès France himself, because he thought that Soustelle was the man who seemed to fill the lack of leadership in colonized Algeria. In 1935, Soustelle became one of the leaders of the "Vigilance Committee of Anti-fascist Intellectuals". In 1940, he was designated by De Gaulle as Chief of the Free France Secret Service. After the Liberation he became De Gualle's Minister of the

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48. Selected Articles, Freedom, V, 4-10 (1954-63), p. 148.

49. Ibid, p. 148.

50. Ibid, pp.148-9.

Colonies. However, ten days after his nomination as Governor-General of Algeria, Soustelle was told by Mendès France:

you will need courage to confront those big panjandrums in Algiers who, up to now, have decreed rain or shine...your mission will be difficult.[51]

On February 6-7, Jacques Soustelle landed in Algiers, keeping in his mind all the instructions:

In north Africa...either there will be a policy of reconciliation, or the policy of repression and force - with all its horrible consequences...[52]

After an extensive tour of Algeria, Jacques Soustelle realized that the Algerian revolution was far more widespread than recognized in France, as he reported:

The rebellion was then tending to become an endemic evil, that of permanent and diffuse guerilla warfare with ambushes, isolated attacks and individuals assaults...at first, these attacks on Moslems soon became more and more frequent and atrocious, by gruesome effects: revolting mutilations, threatening messages pinned to the clothes of victims.[53]

It should be pointed out that the attitude of Soustelle towards the Algerian revolution, was like Mendès France who had reinforced the army. He claimed that:

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51. Jacques Soustelle, Aimée et Souffrante Algérie (Paris: Plon, 1956), p.23.
  52. Jacques Soustelle, La Page n'est pas Tournée (Paris: Plon, 1965), p.13.
  53. Jacques Soustelle, Aimée et Souffrante Algérie, p.39.

No uncertainty must be allowed to remain as to our inflexible determination to preserve Algeria from the terrible destiny that some are seeking to prepare for it. France is at home here, or rather, Algeria and all her inhabitants form an integral part of France, one and indivisible. All must know, here and elsewhere, that France will not leave Algeria any more than she will leave Provence and Brittany. Whatever happens, the destiny of Algeria is French. This means that a choice has been made. The choice is called "integration"; it is to make Algeria each day more completely a province, different from the others, certainly, but fully French.[54]

It should be noted that the French political leaders and people who supported "L'Algérie Française" felt a passionate attachment to Algeria for a number of reasons. First, if Algeria were lost, probably France would be the poorest power in Europe.[55] Second, strategically, Algeria was just across the Mediterranean, "un bassin Français", which made the French politicians say "La plus grande France, de Dunkerque à Tamanrasset", and also the French people believed that Algeria had been built by them, and it was impossible to leave it. Third, in contrast to the nationalist movements with whom the French were used to dealing, in Africa and Indo-China for instance, the FLN in Algeria appeared as barbaric and fanatical resistance. It was extremely difficult for French people to imagine Algeria ruled by such men. Fourthly, the oil and gas that were discovered in the Sahara in 1956, which created a great

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54. Ibid, p.43.

55. 1954 French Trade in Billiards of Francs:

	Export	Import	Balance
Algeria	172.28	115.76	+56.62
Morocco	77.63	51.30	+26.33
Tunisia	42.02	28.75	+13.27
W. Germany	123.13	119.69	+ 3.44
USA	54.07	113.31	-79.24
Iraq	1.29	77.70	-76.41

Source: Annuaire Statistique de la France, 1954. (Paris: 1955), p.245. I have quoted this from Christopher Harrison, "French attitudes to Empire and the Algerian War". African Affairs, Vol. 82, 1983, p.76.

enthusiasm to keep Algeria French, at least for a short time.[56] Up to this point, I shall discuss the most important events in the Algerian War in the next chapters. From here on, only the attitudes of the French intellectuals toward the Algerian War since November 1954 are to be considered.

### **(c) THE ATTITUDE OF THE FRENCH INTELLECTUALS TOWARD THE ALGERIAN WAR.**

Now let us see the attitude of the French intellectuals in the Algerian War, and how their ideas had been influenced by the development of the revolution, as it appeared that there were many thinkers of high intellectual standing who were actively involved in the Algerian revolution since November 1954, from both sides Left-wing and Right-wing. But I am only concerned with Left-wing writers in my discussion, though they expressed quite different points of view toward the Algerian War. As the whole thesis is devoted to examining Sartre and the Algerian revolution, I have to concentrate only on the intellectuals who were close to Sartre and who appeared frequently in his political writings. First, I have to focus on the writings of those intellectuals, Albert Camus, Francis Jeanson and Frantz Fanon, who were actively and practically involved in the struggle of the Algerian people. Second, the characteristic of Sartre's writings and political activities on the Algerian revolution to be examined in detail in the following chapters.

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56. Compare Raoul Girardet, L'Idée coloniale en France de 1871 à 1962 (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972), p.249.

The first intellectual to be investigated is Albert Camus who was long one of Sartre's friends after the Second World War and before the outbreak of the Algerian revolution in November 1954. Indeed, the relationship between Camus and Sartre was very interesting, but in 1952 their friendship broke down because of their well-known debate.

Before discussing Camus' political writings on the Algerian revolution it will be useful to take a close look at him first. Albert Camus was born in 1913 of working class "pied-noir" in "willaya" of Constantine and had been raised in Belcourt, one of the working class neighbourhoods of Algiers, and his early essays reflect the ease and beauty of "pied-noir" life. In many ways, he was typical of an Algerian Frenchman, football was important to him, and also he was fascinated by the Algerian sea. Both his novels L'Etranger (1942), and La Peste (1947), mirror "pied-noir" prejudices. In L'Etranger, the central incident is the senseless killing of an Arab (Algerian), which is revealing even if it is supposed to symbolize man's inhumanity on a large scale. As for La Peste, it has been noted that there are no Algerian Moslems in a story which takes place in Oran. It is true that La Peste was written for Europeans and has been interpreted as an allegory of the Second World War. But the lack of Arabs fits in too perfectly with the "pied-noir" way of life in Algeria to go without mention. However, Camus was a Left-wing "pied-noir" and he joined the Algerian Communist Party in 1930s and strongly criticized the administration in an essay on poverty in Kabylia area written in 1939. Furthermore, he made his name known by writing different articles in Combat, the underground newspaper during the Second World War. After 1945, Camus had

emerged as the intellectual conscience of the post-war generation of the left-of-centre Frenchmen. Indeed, his position in the resistance, his philosophy of the absurd, his essay on revolt had marked him as a humanitarian leftist and gave him the reputation of a man of conscience.

First let us make a comparative evaluation of the political thought of Sartre and Camus mainly during their 1952 debate. According to Simone de Beauvoir, the relationship between Sartre and Camus was stormy after 1945, and the reason for the breakdown of their friendship which seemed to explode so violently was for a long time because of the political and ideological differences which already existed since 1945, and it had intensified from year to year. Camus was an idealist, a moralist and anti-communist, forced to yield to history, while Sartre had laboured since 1940 to repudiate idealism, to free himself from his original individualism and to live history. Sartre's scrupulously qualified justification of Communism and colonial revolution were close to Marxism. His desire was an alliance with the Communists. While Camus was fighting for great principles (as was known before the Algerian War), perhaps that is why he refused to participate in the particular and detailed political actions to which Sartre committed himself. Sartre believed in the truth of Socialism, as it appeared in his political writings, whereas Camus became a more resolute champion of Bourgeois values, particularly in The Rebel which was a statement of his solidarity with bourgeois society. But both Sartre and Camus had been involved in the resistance and had been influenced by that experience in the direction of political commitment, required adjustments to their philosophical premises.

Sartre attacked Camus in his article, "Réponse à Albert Camus", he argued that one must act in history:

Car nous aussi, Camus, nous sommes encagés, et si vous voulez vraiment empêcher qu'un mouvement populaire ne dégénère en tyrannie, ne commencez pas par le condamner sans recours et par menacer de vous retirer au desert, d'autant que vos deserts ne sont jamais qu'une partie un peu moins fréquentée de notre cage; pour mériter le droit d'influencer des hommes qui luttent, il faut d'abord participer à leur combat; il faut d'abord accepter beaucoup de choses, si l'on veut essayer d'en changer quelques-unes.[57]

Sartre interpreted Camus' The Rebel as denying any meaning to history and social commitment. He emphasizes that history would work to create free men in a society of freedom. Thus, he thought that Camus - philosopher of the absurd - was supporting a retreat into art as an individual solution to the absurdity of human existence. When Sartre asked for a volunteer to review Camus' The Rebel, "He wouldn't let anyone say anything bad about it because of their friendship; unfortunately none of us could think of anything good. We wondered how we were going to get out of the dilemma".[58] Sartre persuaded Francis Jeanson to take the responsibility of doing the comment on The Rebel. Jeanson had promised to write his comment circumspectly.

In fact, in his review published in Les Temps Modernes under the title, "Albert Camus où l'âme Revoltée" Francis Jeanson, sharply attacked these assertions.[59] Later Sartre himself rebuked Camus:

L'Histoire a-t-elle un sens? demandez-vous, a-t-elle une fin? Pour moi, c'est la question qui n'a pas de sens: car L'Histoire, en dehors de l'homme qui la fait, n'est qu'un concept abstrait et immobile, dont on ne peut dire ni qu'il a une fin ni qu'il n'en a pas. Et le problème n'est pas de

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57. Sartre, Situations, IV, p.110.

58. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 271.

59. Francis Jeanson, "Albert Camus où l'âme Revoltée," Les Temps Modernes, Vol. 7, No. 75-80, 1952. pp.2070-90.

connaître sa fin, mais de lui en donner une...Il ne s'agit pas de savoir si L'Histoire a un sens et si nous daignons y participer, mais, du moment que nous sommes dedans jusqu'aux cheveux, d'essayer de lui donner le sens qui nous paraît le meilleur, en ne refusant notre concours, si faible soit-il, à aucune des actions concrètes qui le requièrent.[60]

Perhaps this is the spirit of engagement which gives Sartre's work as an historian of contemporary events its character. However, in the above quotation, some would argue that Sartre distorted Camus' position in his response, but Camus did not give us his social commitment. Even Sartre was able to reaffirm in a somewhat different context his principle that the meaning of human freedom is found in history and through social commitment. And when Camus replied to Jeanson's article, he affected to ignore Jeanson's existence and he referred to him only as "your collaborator" Camus sent a letter not to Jeanson, but to "Monsieur le Directeur" "which was comic...there was no Monsieur between us"[61], said Sartre. So, Sartre replied and everything was over between two intellectuals. Later Sartre said that:

I retained a liking for him although his politics were completely foreign to mine, particularly his attitude during the Algerian War.[62]

The outbreak of the Algerian War placed Camus in a terrible dilemma for he could neither dissociate himself from the "pied-noir" nor ignore the injustices of "L'Algérie Française". After the event of Skikda

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60. Sartre, Situations, IV, pp.124-25.

61. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p.269.

62. Ibid, p.269.



when the FLN made an "attentat"\* in the stadium in 1955, Camus wrote to the Algerian Communist Party, saying that he was "ready to despair". He was characterized as a man of principle, a "just man". But he betrayed his principle in the last year of his life during the Algerian War. Here, Camus became "that just man without justice", as described by Simone de Beauvoir. Because he was an exemplary figure for the democratic left, in 1957, Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

Before the outbreak of the Algerian revolution in November 1954, Camus condemned the long history of French abuses in Algeria. Now he condemned the tactics of the FLN (hit-and-run). For him, the only solution for both Moslems and "pied-noir" was the creation of an Algerian federation in which two groups would be given full protection under French law. Here, Camus seemed to ignore the aim of the FLN which lay in the independence and liberation of Algeria. But in 1956, on his return from Algiers, Camus wrote:

I have come back from Algeria almost in despair. What is happening confirms my convictions. It is for me a personal misfortune. But we must not give up; everything cannot be compromised.[63]

It might be "a personal misfortune" since his mother and brother were still living in Algeria.

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- \* "Attentat" means an assassination attempt by the FLN against the French colonialists in Algeria. For the Algerians, the word "attentat" means the use of violence in the struggle for right and liberty; they considered it a justifiable activity in their revolution, and they saw it as a weapon against the existence of French rule in Algeria. But for the Europeans, "attentat" means an act of terrorism against humanity.
63. Albert Camus, "Lettres à Jean Gillbert", Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, No.4 (October-December 1960), p.359.

After 1956, Camus refused to comment on the Algerian War, until the publication of Actuelles, III Chroniques Algériennes (1939-1958). As might be expected, most of the Left-wing intellectuals condemned Camus for his silence towards the Algerian revolution and for not speaking out against the use of torture. Camus refused: "one cannot ask me to protest against a particular repression, which I have done and to justify a particular terrorism, which I shall never do".[64] Moreover he claimed: "...ce n'est apparemment pas le gouvernement de la métropole qui gouverne en Algérie, ni même M. Robert Lacoste, mais n'importe qui.[65]

When the "pied-noir", Albert Camus published his Actuelles, III Chroniques Algériennes (1939-1958) in 1958, he selected all his reports on the Kabyle famine, a study of conditions in Algeria after the Setif event in 1945 and some of his articles printed in L'Express in 1955-56, and also he had written an essay "L'Algérie 1958" as a preface to his Actuelles, III, and he never entertained the idea of independence. In the latter, Camus claimed that the only solution to the Algerian problem was to tie close to France. Camus more or less denied that there was any such thing and was rather patronizing concerning the pan-Islamic Arabist fervour of the FLN as he declared:

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64. Albert Camus, "Letter of Reply to Peter L. Caracciola", Encounter, 8 (June, 1957), p.68.
65. Albert Camus, Actuelles, III Chroniques Algériennes (1939-1958), (Paris: Gallimand, 1958), p.192.

J'ai essayé, à cet égard, de définir clairement ma position. Une Algérie constituée par des peuplements fédérés, et reliée à la France, me paraît préférable, sans comparaison possible au regard de la simple justice, à une Algérie reliée à un empire d'Islam qui ne réaliserait à l'intention des peuples arabes qu'une addition de misères et de souffrances et qui arracherait le peuple Français d'Algérie à sa patrie naturelle.[66]

It should be noted that Camus exaggerated when he presented his plan for setting up a quasi-independent Algeria linked to metropolitan France, and considered Algerian nationalism without historical basis and politically unsound. According to Camus, there had never been an Algerian nation, and the Moslem population was by no means homogenous. The "pied-noir" had the full right to consider themselves indigenous to Algeria. With understandable weariness he claimed that:

"c'est le dernier avertissement que puisse formuler, avant de se taire à nouveau, un écrivain voué, depuis vingt ans, au service de l'Algérie.[67]

In 1955, writing for L'Express, Camus declared his support for Mendès France as a man who might be able to solve the Algerian problem and for Aziz-Kessous, member of the Algerian Communist Party, and the "Communauté Algérienne" group who were seeking a federal solution. In 1956, he supported the idea of a round-table conference and the movement for a civil truce. He condemned torture and violence by both the French and the FLN, as he claimed:

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66. Albert Camus, Actuelles, III Chroniques Algériennes (1939-1958), p.28.

67. Ibid, p. 212.

Si un terroriste jette une grenade au marché de Belcourt que fréquente ma mère et s'il la tue, je serais responsable dans le cas où, pour défendre la justice, j'aurais également défendu le terrorisme. J'aime la justice mais j'aime aussi ma mère.[68]

Moreover, Camus said that:

...la torture: Celle-ci a peut-être permis de retrouver trente bombes, au prix d'un certain honneur, mais elle a suscité du même coup cinquante terroristes nouveaux qui, opérant autrement et ailleurs, feront mourir plus d'innocents encore.[69]

It should be noted that Camus' writings on Algeria are flawed and ambiguous. In 1957, at a press conference in Stockholm, he declared: **Je crois à la justice, mais je défendrai ma mère avant la justice**"[70] which amounted to saying that he was on the side of the "pied-noir" who were killing and torturing in order to keep "L'Algérie Française" since 1945. Finally, in his involvement, Camus restated and reaffirmed his position, and concluded his *Actuelles*, III: **"Voici mon témoignage, auquel je n'ajouterai rien"**. [71]

However, when Pierre Stibbe, Left-wing lawyer of Ben-Saddok (we shall see more information about Saddok in the next chapter) called several Left-wing intellectuals as witnesses for the defence, Camus was in Stockholm and later in a private letter written on behalf of Ben-Saddok, he declared that:

In particular, I do not want in any case to give a good conscience, by declaration without risk for me, to the stupid

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68. Letter to Emmanuel Robles, Essais, (Paris: NRF, Gallimard, 1965) p.1843.

69. Albert Camus, Actuelles, III Chroniques Algériennes (1939-1958), p.16.

70. Albert Camus, Essais, p. 1882.

71. Albert Camus, Actuelles, III Chroniques Algériennes, (1939-1958), p.901.

fanatic who in Algiers might fire on a crowd in which my mother and family might be found. This reason which could seem naive in Paris, has for me the force of a passion approved by reason.[72]

In justification of his position, Camus wrote in his introduction to Actuelles, III:

Quand sa propre famille est en péril immédiate de mort, on peut vouloir la rendre plus généreuse et plus juste, on doit même continuer à la faire, comme ce livre en témoigne, mais (qu'on ne s'y trompe pas!) sans manquer à la solidarité qu'on lui doit dans ce danger mortel, pour qu'elle survive au moins et qu'en vivant, elle retrouve alors la chance d'être juste. A mes yeux, c'est cela l'honneur, et la vraie justice, ou bien je reconnais ne plus rien savoir d'utile en ce monde.[73]

Certainly, there were many people who supported Camus' justice toward the Algerian question. Among them Jules Roy, "pied-noir", a friend of Camus, he wrote in his book dedicated to Camus' memory:

I agree that one should render justice to one group without depriving others of justice at the same time. But I respect an order based on urgency: I yield to the injustice that cries out, since the other, for the moment only constitutes a hypothetical injustice.[74]

But later, after Camus' death, Roy went to a FLN refugee camp in Tunisia and his trip had convinced him that his primary solidarity was not with his own community of "pied-noir" in Algeria but with the struggle of the

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72. Quoted in Herbert R. Lottman, Albert Camus, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1978). pp.619-20.

73. Albert Camus, Actuelles, III Chroniques Algériennes (1939-1958), pp.14-15.

74. Jules Roy, La Guerre d'Algérie, (Paris: Julliard, 1960), p.207.

Algerian people. He concluded in reply to Camus: "It is not a question of preferring your mother to justice. It is a question of loving justice as much as your own mother".[75] As it appeared that Camus had a negative position on the aim of the FLN. He refused to accept the authenticity and legitimacy of Algerian nationalism and he did not reject the colonial situation, and further he insisted that it had to be reformed. Camus had sharply reacted to the struggle of the Algerian people, like the other defenders of "L'Algérie Française", he rejected even negotiations with the FLN. He claimed that:

Those who, in purposely vague terms, advocate negotiation with the FLN cannot fail to be aware, after the precise statements of the FLN, that this means the independence of Algeria under the direction of the most relentless military leaders of the insurrection - in other words, (under the Algerian flag) the eviction of 1,200,000 Europeans from Algeria and the humiliation of millions of Frenchmen, with all the risks that such a humiliation involves.[76]

Although the Algerian students in both France and Sweden attempted to persuade Camus about the independence of Algeria and the aim of the FLN, he rejected even the discussion of the liberation and the independence of Algeria. Later, after Algerian independence, I think Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, the politician writer and ex. Algerian Minister of foreign affairs, is right when he stated in his book de la décolonisation à la révolution culturelle (1962-1972):

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75. Ibid, p.208.

76. Albert Camus, Resistance, Rebellion and Death. Translated by Justin O'Brien (New York: Knopf, 1961), p.90.

Camus n'a pas été à la hauteur de cet idéal. Pourtant les Algériens lui auraient volontiers conféré, eux le titre de "Camus l'Algérien"... c'eût été à nos yeux comme un autre prix Nobel, quelque chose comme un prix Nobel de la décolonisation, c'est-à-dire du plus grand mouvement de l'histoire actuelle. Camus ne l'a pas mérité. Il restera donc pour nous un grand écrivain ou plutôt un grand styliste, mais un étranger.

Albert Camus vu par un Algérien.[77]

It should be pointed out that Camus did not comment on the Algerian revolution until 1958. He told Jean Bloch-Michel in October 1959, that if a referendum on the independence of Algeria took place he would campaign for self-determination but against full independence of Algeria in Algerian newspapers.[78] Unfortunately, he did not live to see peace, when the "pied-noir" did go back to France, or Israel and Argentina.

The second intellectual to be investigated is Francis Jeanson who was long one of Sartre's closest collaborators as well, from January 1951 to November 1956. When Jeanson refused to support Sartre in his harsh condemnation of the Russian intervention in Hungary in 1956, he broke his relationship with Sartre. However, the opposition to the Algerian War

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77. Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, de la décolonisation à la révolution culturelle: (1962-1972) (Algiers: SNED, 1981). p.184.

78. Jean Bloch-Michel, "Albert Camus et la Nostalgie de L'Innocence", Preuves, No.110 (April 1960), pp.3-9.

brought them together again in May 1959.[79]

Francis Jeanson is an intellectual Left-winger. In addition to being a philosopher, he is a Marxist, politician, professor, publisher and editor. During the Second World War Jeanson had escaped into Spain to join the Free French. There he had been thrown into a concentration camp, which had ruined his health. When he was released he went to Algeria and he made many nationalist friends. When he returned to France, he warned that France was "sitting on a volcano". In 1955, Francis and his wife Colette Jeanson had published a book L'Algérie hors la Loi (1955) (Lawless Algeria) which explained and defended the cause of the FLN in the Algerian revolution and criticized the atrocities of the French Army in Algeria.[80] Both Jeanson and his wife argued that:

...continued suppression of Algerian independence would cost French citizens their civil liberties and French workers their remaining bargaining power.[81]

It seems that this is the first important Left-wing statement on the

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79. Francis Jeanson, Le Problème Morale et la Pensée de Sartre (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1965), p.298.

80. It should be pointed out that later in the Algerian independence Ferhat Abbas Commented on behalf of this book:  
Ce livre vulgarisa les données du problème Algérienne et rendit explicable, à la conscience du peuple Français, l'insurrection du 1er Novembre 1954. Ferhat Abbas, Autopsie d'une Guerre, p.198.

81. Francis Jeanson and Colette Jeanson, L'Algérie hors La Loi (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1955), p.17.



Algerian problem to appear after the outbreak of the war. Jeanson himself was well known in Left-wing circles. Also, he made his reputation as a disciple, interpreter and associate of Jean-Paul Sartre's thought.

Jeanson's familiarity with the existentialist concept of responsibility suggested his close relationship with Sartre. For years, Jeanson had worked with Sartre on Les Temps Modernes, where he was best remembered before the Algerian War started on November 1954 as the author of the article of Albert Camus' Rebel (1952) which ended Camus and Sartre's friendship. However, Jeanson had established a reputation independently of Sartre for his political concern with the Algerian question. But their major ethical argument demonstrated Jeanson's close relationship with Sartre as Jeanson stated:

You are French, you "demand" that the army of your country pursue its actions only in accord with certain well-defined conditions, no longer torture militants and suspects, no longer "regroup" and exterminate the Algerian population. Your existence remains dead letter...you are reduced to impotence...[Nevertheless] you support a cause, whether you wish to or not. And the timid words that you pronounce in one direction will never equal the practical consequences, in the other direction, of your submission and of your abstention. You are on the side of the oppressors...you must choose, and not half-heartedly, and you have only your lifetime to make a human choice, men against all conformity, against all legality, against all the "good reasons" which will ceaselessly flow from your need for security, your fear, "raison d'état" and its blind disciplines of cult or party which you make into a duty for yourself in order to avoid your true duties.[82]

Up to this point both Jeanson's and Sartre's attitude contrasted sharply with Camus who strongly refused to find France guilty:

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82. Francis Jeanson, Notre Guerre (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1960), pp.59-60. See also Sartre, "Vous êtes Formidables" in Les Temps Modernes, No.135, May, pp.1641-7, where he speaks of avoiding the theory of "Bad Faith".

La France est un état de péché historique,...il me paraît degoûtant de battre sa couple, comme nos juges - pénitents, sur la poitrine d'autrui, vain de condamner plusieurs siècles d'expansion Européenne,...Je crois en Algérie à une politique de réparation, non à une politique d'expiation.[83]

Jeanson supported the FLN's aim of independence and liberation for Algeria, and he suggested that the French Left would gain from an alliance with the FLN not only material support but also inspiration. Thus, Jeanson and his supporters who gave illegal clandestine support to the Algerians in France formed later a network of support for the FLN political movement, not only by writing and struggling outside the underground, but also by acting and working for the FLN's political activities. The Clandestine and illegalism of the network was a form of political expression. Originally the "Jeanson network" was named by the press in September 1960, when the trial of Jeanson's collaborators took place, as we are going to see in the last chapter, (indeed the "network" was named after its leading spirit), and later called Vérités Pour... (Truths For...), as illustrated in the following quotation:

Depuis 1956...La Fédération de France du FLN, on l'a vu, s'est mise en quête de Français susceptibles de participer matériellement, directement - et clandestinement bien sûr - à certains aspects de ses activités: transport ou - delà des frontières Françaises de fonds destinés au combattants du FLN, hébergement, protection de militants opérant sur le sol Français, création de filières permettant le passage à l'étranger, etc. Plusieurs réseaux de soutien, à partir surtout des années 1957-1958...le plus connu et le plus important est celui qui est organisé, à la fin de 1957, par Francis Jeanson,...[84]

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83. Albert Camus, Actuelles, III, p.22-3.

84. La Guerre d'Algérie. Sous la direction d'Henri Alleg, Jacques de Bonis, Henri J. Douzan, Jean Ferreire et Pierre Houdiguet collection réalisée avec la collaboration de Gibertt Alleg. (Paris: Temps Actuels, 1981), p.232-33.

It should be noted that the main work of the network was to collect money and funds from the Algerian workers and the French collaborators and send it to the Algerian revolution in France via Tunis and Switzerland in order to buy arms and aid homeless people.[85] as Jeanson stated:

"...des services à la fédération de France du FLN: "Au début les gens faisaient surtout partie du milieu dans lequel je naviguais moi-même puisque c'est moi qui a commencé à constituer les premiers dispositifs d'aide. On sait bien que, par exemple, il y a eu tout un travail de recrutement dans le milieu des comédiens à un moment donné pour des hébergement...Il y a eu toute une période où je ne couchais pas deux soirs durant au même endroit et je me souviens d'avoir été hébergé par des gens qui étaient très différents les uns des autres..."[86]

Also, they hid the Algerians wanted by the police, since the police had strong racist attitudes toward the Algerian workers (until now). They were stopping and searching Algerians including the FLN militants, that is, any Algerian acting as courier would at once attract suspicion. Jeanson and his collaborators acted as couriers, instead of Algerians, from France to Switzerland, Belgium and Tunisia. As Jeanson claimed later in his book La Révolution Algérienne. Problèmes et Perspectives (1962): "yes, the arms financed might have been used to shoot French soldiers in the back".[87] Perhaps Jeanson is right because the method of the FLN in the main cities particularly in Algiers, was to surprise the French military forces by shooting them in the back. However, for three years, Jeanson struggled with the FLN in illegal clandestine activities without receiving any

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85. Francis Jeanson, Sartre dans sa Vie (Paris: Editions du Seuil 1974), p.231.

86. La Guerre d'Algérie. Sous la direction d'Henri Alleg, Jacques de Bonis, Henri, J. Douzan, Jean Ferriere et Pierre Houdiquet. Collection réalisée avec la collaboration de Gibertt Alleg. p. 233.

87. Francis Jeanson, La Révolution Algérienne Problèmes et Perspectives (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1962), p. 19.

pay or direct orders from them. In one year, he managed to smuggle out ten billion French Francs with six Algerians to Swiss banks.[88] This point will be discussed at length in the last chapter. In Sartre and the Problem of Morality, Robert V. Stone, the translator, affirmed that:

How to maintain the ambiguity between individual authenticity and revolutionary liberation was for Jeanson as much a practical as it was a theoretical problem. His most noteworthy effort was not in his philosophical works, nor in his role...but in his political action during the Algerian War 1954-1962.[89]

Although the network was organized and directed as a politically serious enterprise, it gave moral explanations of its actions independent of a political analysis of its success. Jeanson and his supporters saw that the first effort to "maintain the chance for Franco-Algerian friendship",[90] and second, the desire, "to save the honour of France and its most valuable traditions".[91] Here, Jeanson's supporters affirmed their patriotism and their conviction that it was acting in the best interests of the French people by its action. Jeanson used language in order to maintain his notion of Franco-Algerian friendship. In Notre Guerre, Francis Jeanson stressed that:

In order to save the last chances of a Franco-Algerian friendship we had no time for delay...An Algeria hostile to France is a Maghreb hostile to France, is a black Africa hostile to France: it is the radical break between our old continent and the new African world, it is asphyxiation, finally, for a Europe drawn into herself and condemned to stagnation, that is to say, to decadence...If, on the other hand, Algeria sees itself obliged to play without reserve the

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88. In Vérité-Liberté, June 1960.

89. Francis Jeanson, Sartre and the Problem of Morality. Translated by Robert V. Stone (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, c.1980),p.xviii.

90. In a featured letter to Les Temps Modernes, April-May 1960, p.1536.

91. Ibid, p.1536.

Eastern card, Africa will move entirely and will open, by the breach so created, to an imported brand of socialism.[92]

Moreover, he wrote in order to characterize their actions in terms of solidarity with the French people:

We firmly believe that our action is just. We hope to convince as many as possible of our fellow-citizens of it. But we do not feel of another essence than them; and if our reactions to them are sometimes brutal, they remain nonetheless fraternal, for all together we will surmount the situation or all together we will perish...not only have we never envisioned cutting ourselves off from France, but we claim insistently the possibility to be truly French and that is why we have now set to work to reconstitute a national community.[93]

Jeanson's network gave full support to the FLN, particularly in theory: "Our engagement on their side was total".[94] Jeanson went on to insist, therefore, that there was a "contradiction" because his people at the same time remained French. He emphasized that:

Let us say then that at the same time we had both to "betray" the French in making common cause with the Algerians and "betray" the Algerians by staying resolutely French. This double "betrayal" is our loyalty: to the French cause, and to the human cause, which justly should be one and the same cause.[95]

Further, Jeanson and his colleagues proposed in their conviction that the French Left should form a practical alliance with the FLN. The only Leftist

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92. Francis Jeanson, Notre Guerre, pp.43-45.

93. Ibid, pp.12, 14.

94. Ibid, pp. 53-4.

95. Ibid, p.54.

press that supported Jeanson's proposal was Les Temps Modernes; the rest condemned their suggestion and called for a new resistance against Jeanson's attitude. He declared that his group was putting into practice solidarity with the Algerian revolution, and was convinced that aid to the FLN must be recognized. In his letter to Les Temps Modernes, Jeanson explained that:

Since the Left has lost the sense of action, it was necessary to act in order to give it back and thus to act in the direction of solidarity. Since the Left could not come to unite, it was necessary that each of our undertakings be itself an example of unity in action...it is action alone which can act on the masses, giving them food for thought and communicating to them a line of thought which is more than a reflection of impotence.[96]

It should be pointed out that the supporters of Jeanson who aided the FLN asserted that the French Left and the FLN were already allies because they had the same enemy, colonialism and imperialism.[97] The army and the "pied-noir" in Algeria, who were fighting the FLN and the innocent people were the same forces as an authoritarian regime in France. Certainly, in the form of colonialism, as Jeanson put it, the capitalist system exploited the French proletariat, as well as exploiting the Algerian people.[98] He went further, arguing that the FLN in Algeria had not only the same enemy, but also the same aims as the French Left. So, both the FLN and the French Left were struggling for freedom and social justice. In his book, Intellectuals and Decolonization in France, Paul C. Sorum stated that: "The French Left, with its inveterate paternalism,

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96. Francis Jeanson in his letter to Les Temps Modernes, April-May 1960, pp.1542-3.

97. Paul Clay Sorum, Intellectuals and Decolonization in France, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), p.169.

98. Francis Jeanson, Press Conference, "Lettre à Jean-Paul Sartre", Vérités Pour, No.1 (20 September 1958), pp.18-9.

doubted for a long time that the Algerian revolt was socially progressive".[99] However, the social and political economy of Algeria and her destiny would force independent Algeria to adopt Socialism.[100] In Vérité-Liberté, Sartre said that "At the point where we are, the only way to influence opinion is to go beyond it".[101] (We shall see more information about the participation of the Jeanson network in the Algerian revolution in the last chapter).

The French writer, Georges Arnaud published an article in Paris-Press in which he said that: "Les étranges confidences du professeur Jeanson"[102] Also, the members of "la Fédération de France du FLN" wrote in El-Moudjahid:

Heureusement, le soutien n'a pas été le monopole exclusif d'un ou deux chefs de réseau. Cette participation multiforme, expression concrète de l'option anticolonialiste d'innombrables militants progressistes, ouvriers, intellectuels, chrétiens démocrates de France et d'autres pays d'Europe, a, tout en contribuant au triomphe d'une cause juste, permis l'amorce de relations nouvelles entre les peuples Algériens et Français.[103]

In 1952, Jeanson met Frantz Fanon. Jeanson had already read Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks, before he met him. Later, after Fanon's death, Jeanson described this encounter:

In 1952, we almost broke off our relations, he and I, the very day of our first meeting. Having found his manuscript

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99. Paul Clay. Sorum, Intellectuals and Decolonization in France, p.169.

100. Francis Jeanson, Notre Guerre, p.75.

101. Sartre in Vérité-Liberté, 3 July-August, 1960.

102. Paris-Press, April 19, 1960.

103. El-Moudjahid, November 18, 1979.

interesting, I committed the error of telling him so, which made him suspect me of having thought, "for a Negro, that wasn't so bad". As a result of which, I showed him the door and expressed my own reaction in the liveliest terms - which he had the good sense to take well.[104]

The unity of goal between Francis Jeanson and Frantz Fanon became later more close in the Algerian revolution, especially when Jeanson and his Algerian associates arranged for Fanon to join the FLN in January, 1957. Both Jeanson and Fanon had taken direct, illegal action without examining either "public opinion" or "the impotent French left". First, let us take a close look at Frantz Fanon.

At the end of 1956, Doctor Frantz Fanon wrote his resignation to the Governor-General of Algiers, leaving his hospital directorship at Blida-Joinville (psychiatric clinic). He came over to the FLN, body and soul. Born in 1925 in Martinique as a French citizen, he had become an Algerian by choice. [105] During the Second World War, Fanon had joined the Free French as many French intellectuals did. He had been wounded and decorated in the liberation of France. He discovered that a black man was not treated as an equal in the French Army. Fanon, the dark-skinned Frenchman, discovered that he was a "Negro" in white society. He studied medicine in the University of Lyon. As there was no equality between two races, black and white, he tried to become a European, but he discovered his blackness. As his patients identified him: "We have a Negro doctor: his hands are very gentle", and his students described him: "We have a Negro professor, he is very intelligent". [106]

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104. Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks. Translated by Charles L. Markmann (New York: Grove Press, Evergreen Books, 1967), p. 213.

105. Alistide R. Zolberg, "Frantz Fanon", Encounter, Vol. 27, November 1966, p. 56.

106. Irene L. Gendzier, Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study, (London: Wildwood house, 1973), p. 57.



In 1954, Fanon went to Algeria as a doctor. He remained there for two years and became an important figure of supporting the FLN, particularly when he treated the nationalist warriors. Fanon did not live to see peace in Algeria. It was discovered that he was suffering from leukaemia, and he was sent by the FLN to Military Hospital in Washington. In December, 1961, he died aged thirty-six. The government of Algeria now gives full respect to Frantz Fanon. There is School, Lycée (secondary school), Hospital and Boulevard in his honour; as the Algerians stated in Fanon's book:

En Algérie indépendante, le message fut saisi directement dans les milieux militants dont il exprimait les valeurs et l'inquiétude...Fanon devint petit à petit une figure symbolique, à qui furent dédiés une avenue, un lycée, son ancien hôpital.  
[107]

When Fanon resigned from Blida Hospital, he went to Tunis, via Paris where he met again with Jeanson. In his studies in A Dying Colonialism, Fanon observed his colleagues in the hospital during the War:

We have seen military doctors, called to the bedside of an Algerian soldier wounded in combat, refuse to treat him. The official pretext was that there was no longer a chance to save the wounded man. After the soldier had died, the Doctor would admit that this solution had appeared to him preferable to a stay in prison where it would have been necessary to feed him while awaiting execution. The Algerians of the region of Blida know a certain hospital director who would kick the bleeding chests of the war wounded while lying in the corridor of his establishment.[108]

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107. Frantz Fanon, Les damnés de la Terre (Réghara: Editions El-Anis, 1987), p.17.

108. Frantz Fanon, A Dying Colonialism. Translated by Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, Evergreen, 1967), p. 139.

In Tunis, Fanon rejoined the Algerian leadership, and worked as an editorial writer for El-Moudjahid, the official newspaper of the FLN, which appeared in French and Arabic editions. Suddenly, El-Moudjahid became an important newspaper which began to deal with revolutionary theory, and attempted to link the struggle in Algeria with other countries in the third world. The great hope of Fanon's political attitude was to unite African countries which could work with Asia and Latin America in a campaign in order to be independent from Europe and the United States of America. In her book Force of Circumstance, Simone de Beauvoir emphasized that, "he had dreamed of a United Africa freed from all foreign exploitation".[109] In addition to being editor of El-Moudjahid in Tunis, Fanon was treating wounded soldiers of the FLN in refugee camps in the Tunisian border and also in the Moroccan border in emergency and difficult cases. On behalf of the revolution Fanon wrote:

The revolution in depth, the true revolution because it transforms man and renews society, is very advanced. This oxygen which invents and organizes a humanity, it is that also, the Algerian revolution.[110]

According to Fanon, the striking example of this phenomenon in revolutionary Algeria was the veil of a woman, which was as a badge of identity and as a basis of solidarity, as he wrote:

In the Arab Maghreb, the veil belongs to the clothing traditions of the Tunisian, Algerian, Moroccan and Libyan national societies. For the tourist and foreigner, the veil demarcates both Algerian society and its feminine that one

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109. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p.597.

110. Frantz Fanon, A Dying Colonialism, p. 140.

component...That woman sees in her white veil unifies the perception that one has of Algerian feminine society. Obviously what we have here is a uniform which tolerates no modification, nor variant.[111]

It should be pointed out that Fanon was aware of Algerian society and culture because the French formula toward Algerian woman was "let's win over the women, and the rest will follow". The colonial administration was convinced of this idea, as Fanon declared:

If we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight.[112]

Fanon argued that the Algerian women participated in their struggle by carrying a bomb, or a bag of grenades under the veil and putting them in French military targets. However, with the conversion of the veil into a military camouflage the enemy gradually became extra alerted as Fanon put it:

In the streets one witnessed what became a commonplace spectacle of Algerian women glued to the wall, over whose bodies the famous magnetic detectors, the "frying pans" would be passed. Every veiled woman, every Algerian woman became suspect. There was no discrimination. This was the period during which men, women, children, the whole Algerian people experienced at one and the same time their national vocation and the recasting of the new Algerian society.[113]

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111. Ibid, pp.35-6.

112. Ibid, p.42.

113. Ibid, pp. 61-2.

Fanon had worked for El-Moudjahid between 1957 and 1961. El-Moudjahid was produced to keep the population informed of the progress of the revolution and of the position of the FLN and his army ALN. In June 1956 El-Moudjahid appeared for the first time in Algeria and came out irregularly until the press was transferred to Tunis. Also, Fanon used to work for the FLN press organ, Résistance Algérienne. Apparently, Belkacem Krim, Vice-President of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria (GPRA) is right when he stated that:

Frantz Fanon!  
"Ton exemple restera toujours vivant. Repose en paix!  
L'Algérie ne t'oubliera pas".[114]

In one of his articles in El-Moudjahid, Fanon affirmed that the Algerian revolution was the beginning stage of a larger movement toward independence. This independence had to be the messenger of a democratic and social revolution. For Fanon, Algeria was economically and socially part of the "Maghreb" (Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Morocco), "the half-moon shaped area of North Africa". As El-Moudjahid wrote in December, 1957:

"That a Maghreb exploited for the needs of a colonial strategy will give way to a unified and strong Maghreb capable of promoting the development of its own natural resources in the primary interest of the North African people..."[115]

It should be noted that Fanon hoped that North Africa would unite with black Africa in order to protect its own independence from Europe. As he wrote in El-Moudjahid:

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114. Belkacem Krim, "Frantz Fanon!", El-Moudjahid, No. 88, December 21, 1961. (Extract from speech delivered at Fanon's funeral by Belkacem Krim).

115. El-Moudjahid, December 1957.

More and more the effects of all the Algerian revolution in Black Africa become noticeable. More and more a community of interests develops between the people living North and South of the Sahara.[116]

Fanon's dream was to add another Algerian military basis to the Sahara's history; he hoped to make it into an invasion route from South to North, and to open a new front against French military bases in the South, which was isolated and never had any attacks from the ALN. Indeed, after 1958 Fanon made several trips to Mali and Niger in order to arrange for African Volunteers to aid the Algerian revolution.[117] However, the leaders of the FLN were very proud of Fanon's political activities. In 1960, they had sent him to Ghana as the representative (an Ambassador) of the Algerian revolutionary provisional government. In her Force of Circumstance, Simone de Beauvoir emphasized that:

...later the GPRA sent him as their ambassador to Accra; he made many trips through Africa, assuring Algerian support to all those who rose in revolt against colonialist domination.[118]

When Sartre wrote a preface for Fanon's book, Les Damnés de la Terre (The Wretched of the Earth) (1961) he "asserted his entire solidarity with Algerian people - as a Frenchman"[119] said Simone de Beauvoir. It should be pointed out that when Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre met Fanon the conversations were always about the Algerian revolution and the FLN's political action, as Simone de Beauvoir claims: "Because of the friendship we felt for him, and also because of what he could do for the future of Algeria and Africa...He was an exceptional man".[120]

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116. Ibid

117. Peter Geismar, "Frantz Fanon: Evolution of a Revolutionary - A Biographical Sketch", Monthly Review, May 1969, p. 28.

118. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, pp.607-608.

119. Ibid, p.611.

120. Ibid, p.611.

Moreover, Sartre stated later that:

Fanon, Martiniquais, arrière-petit-fils d'esclave, quitte un pays qui n'a pas, à l'époque, pris conscience de la personnalité antillaise et de ses exigences. Il épouse la révolte Algérienne et combat, Noir, au milieu des musulmans blancs; entraîné avec eux dans une guerre atroce et nécessaire, il adopte le radicalisme de ses nouveaux Frères, se fait le théoricien de la violence révolutionnaire et souligne dans ses livres la vocation socialiste de L'Afrique: sans réforme agraire et sans nationalisation des entreprises coloniales l'indépendance est un vain mot.[121]

It should be noted that the views on the French - Algerian War and especially torture of Fanon are from the viewpoint of a third world intellectual raised in a francophone colonized situation. He said: The European nation that practices torture is a blighted nation, unfaithful to its history.[122] According to Fanon, if France behaved "cleanly" and without "barbarity" there would be no "blight" to speak of to cause it to be considered: "unfaithful to its history". So Fanon's writings and political activities on the Algerian revolution are in favour of the FLN. He emphasised that the FLN's proper conduct did not go "to the lengths to which colonialism has gone"[123]

However, as we have seen, the attitude of both intellectuals Francis Jeanson and Frantz Fanon toward the Algerian revolution was totally in

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121. Sartre, Situations, V, p. 194.

122. Frantz Fanon, A dying colonialism, p.24.

123. Ibid, p.25.

favour of the struggle of the Algerian people for their freedom. Indeed, they committed themselves to the FLN not only by writings and support but also by taking action on behalf of the Algerians against their own people, on the other hand, Albert Camus' writings on and political activities during the Algerian War, are in favour of "L'Algérie Française".

But there were intellectuals who were pulled both ways like André Malraux, whose experiences of the First World War were expressed in La Condition Humaine (1933), and who later suffered brutal treatment at the hands of the Nazis.[124] Later, he became a member of the government from 1958 to 1962. Malraux, like all politicians, refused to disclaim publicly the government's use of torture.[125] When asked to join the group of intellectuals opposing colonialism, Malraux said in 1958:

At the moment, you know, we are not decolonizing, we're consolidating, we are holding a situation with whatever lies to hand, we are at war because nothing was thought out in advance...And so for lack of an ideology, we let things take their course, even to the point of torture...[126]

It seems that the French Army Captain on duty in Algeria was right when he said: "We do not have much faith in the French Intellectuals. They give up too easily".[127]

Now let us discuss Sartre's attitude towards the Algerian War and what was his reaction at the beginning, to the outbreak of the Algerian revolution?

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124. Jean lacouture, André Malraux. Translated by Alan Sheridan, (London: André Deutsch, 1975) p. 407.

125. Ibid, p. 401.

126. Ibid, p. 390.

127. Jules Roy, La guerre d'Algérie, p. 87.

In November 1955, before Fanon joined FLN's El-Moudjahid, Les Temps Modernes came out with a strong editorial declaring that "Algeria is not France". It claimed that, if Algeria is France, social security, liberty and justice must be revised and unified in order to eliminate discrimination.[128] On the contrary, if Algeria is not part of France, then one must negotiate with the nationalists (FLN) and recognize the Algerian people's power to administer itself.[129] In the same number of Les Temps Modernes, Mohamed Cherif Sahli, pro-FLN, wrote an article entitled "De 'L'assimilation' à 'L'intégration': Une Mystification Politique", he stated that:

[Algerians] do not ignore the fact their [the left's] task is difficult, given the prejudices that arise out of the old myth of "L'Algérie Française". But they believe that in order to enlighten and win over a worried and troubled [public] opinion, it is not enough to denounce the abuses and the violence of the system. If one wishes to work for a positive solution, one must free the Algerian problem from the spider's web of official lies and directly attack the system itself.[130]

Before discussing how Sartre reacted initially to the Algerian revolution, it will be useful to know first Sartre's activities in 1954, when the Algerian War started. Sartre was invited to many international conferences in Belgium, Berlin and Moscow. Both Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were busy on their own writings and travelling. The Mandarins (1954) by Simone de Beauvoir, was published, winning her the prestigious "Goncourt Prize". In addition to his writings and travelling, Sartre was made Vice-president of the France-USSR Association in December 1954. Further, he

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128. "L'Algérie n'est pas La France", Les Temps Modernes, Vol. II. No.119, November 1955, p. 577.

129. Ibid, p.579.

130. Mohamed Cherif Sahli, "De 'L'Assimilation' à 'L'Intégration': Une Mystification Politique", Les Temps Modernes, Vol.II. No. 119, 1955 p.615.



wrote several articles on this subject for the review France, USSR, and he gave a long and enthusiastic interview about the relation between France and Soviet Union to Libération. In 1955, Sartre published his play in eight acts, Nékrassov, in Les Temps Modernes, and he maintained his friendship with the Soviet Union and, later in the year, with China. In their book The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka emphasized that:

Only one attitude is possible - gratitude and friendship toward a people who have shed their blood to save their future - and the future of the universe - and who have proved their sacrifices that they meant to make history, not submit to it; towards a people who were for half a century, each time Germany threatened the peace, always there at our side.[131]

On the 6 September 1955, Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir went to China for two months, in order to get their own writings known there. They were received at the highest official levels: by the Vice-Minister, Chen-Yi and Mao Tse-Tung. But before they went to China, they had attended in June the Congress of the Peace Movement in Helsinki, where Sartre called in his speech for a new kind of peace, which would be "an indissoluble whole, an indestructable bond between a certain kind of international relations and a certain kind of political and social relations within nations..."[132] In the Peace Congress, Sartre met the Algerian delegation and he discussed the situation in Algeria with them. In Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir asserted that "yes...we met some Algerians who told us about the situation in Algeria".[133]

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131. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, Vol. II, p.314.

132. Quoted in Libération (20 June, 1955).

133. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p.366.

At first Sartre seemed to ignore the outbreak of the Algerian revolution in November 1954, much as any Frenchman. He was occupied by writings and travelling, as we have seen, as a result of his friendship link with the Eastern Bloc. Gradually, Sartre realized that France was facing a new situation in Algeria. In 1950, he had gone to Algeria, and he had travelled from the North to the South, then to Mali and Senegal, and he had seen the political, social and economic structures of "L'Algérie Française". As Simone de Beauvoir reported later:

We were opposed to the colonial system, but we had no a priori prejudices against the men who administered native affairs or supervised the construction of the roads.[134]

However, Sartre became involved in the Algerian War on January 27, 1956 when André Mandouze,[135] Professor of Literature at the University of Algiers, who formed around him an important sector of pro-FLN sympathizers in the University, returned to Paris and called for a meeting of the "Comité d'Action" at the "Salle Wagram". The protesters present stated that: "For the respect of people's right to govern themselves. For a peaceful solution to the Algerian problem, etc..."[136] Professor Mandouze told the meeting: "This morning I was in Algiers...I bring you the greeting of the Algerian revolution".[137] Although, Les Temps Modernes had been critical of French colonialism in North Africa before

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134. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p.205.

135. André Mandouze had close contacts with the FLN's leaders like Abane Remdane and Youcef Ben-Khedda, attempting to create a bridge between them and the French government, though he was never actually a member of the FLN. He was forced to resign from the University of Algiers and return to France. See more information about his activities in the Algerian War in his book La Révolution Algérienne par les Textes (Paris: François Maspéro, 1961).

136. Quoted in Annie Cohen-Solal, Sartre: A Life, p.368.

137. Ibid, p.368.

the Algerian revolution started, and in October, 1955 the editorial had sided with the struggle of the Algerian people, Sartre warned his assistant Marcel Péju not to go too far in supporting the FLN, as Péju said later in one of his interviews:

**The Algerians associated French rule with repression, racism and torture. Sartre warned Péju not to go too far in supporting the FLN.[138]**

According to Péju, Sartre did not support the FLN when the Algerian revolution started in November 1954. But the November uprising came out explicitly in favour of the FLN, and by then a group of French intellectuals had begun to support and to publish the evidence that ALN were being tortured, thousands of innocent people had been interned in camps. But at the meeting of the "Comité d'Action" Sartre dealt with the Algerian problem directly for the first-time - when it seemed to him, it was first of all, economic and it was a matter of giving bread to nine million people. In one of his strongest assessments of the problem, Sartre:

**La seule chose que nous puissions et devrions tenter - mais c'est aujourd'hui l'essentiel - c'est de lutter à ses côtés pour délivrer à la fois les Algériens et les Français de la tyrannie coloniale.[139]**

It should be noted that when Sartre wrote "Le Colonialisme est un Système", (colonialism is a system), in 1956, Les Temps Modernes called for the recognition of Algeria and for negotiation with the FLN. Thus, Sartre made his most detailed effort to establish the "totality" of the French occupation of Algeria, that complex of political, social and economic structures in place when the Algerian War started. He affirmed that:

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138. Marcel Péju interview with Ronald Hayman, 28.04.1985. Quoted in Ronald Hayman's Writings Against A Biography of Sartre (London: Weidenfeld, 1986). p.295.

139. Sartre, "Le colonialisme est un Système", Les Temps Modernes, No. 123, 1956, p. 1386.

C'est que la colonisation n'est ni un ensemble de hasards ni le résultat statistique de milliers d'entreprises individuelles. C'est un système qui put mis en place vers le milieu du XIX siècle.[140]

However, the Algerian question was the first political issue to which Sartre devoted himself, as he affirmed later:

I have always looked upon colonialism as an action of pure theft, the brutal conquest of a country and the absolutely intolerable exploitation of one country by another; I thought that all the colonial states would have to get rid of their colonies sooner or later.[141]

Sartre supported the cause of self-determination for the Algerian people. It was exactly what Sahli, and particularly Fanon, called for as the indispensable statement of the matter. Let us first quote Sartre's main arguments which attack colonialism:

Je voudrais vous mettre en garde ce qu'on peut appeler la "mystification néo-colonialiste..."

La mystification consiste en ceci: On vous promène en Algérie, on vous montre complaisamment la misère du peuple, qui est affreuse, on vous raconte les humiliations que les méchants colons font subir aux musulmans. Et puis, quand vous êtes bien indignés, on ajoute: "Voilà pourquoi les meilleurs Algériens ont pris les armes: ils n'en pouvaient plus. " Si l'on s'y est bien pris, nous reviendrons convaincus:

1. Que le problème Algérien est d'abord économique. Il s'agit, par de judicieuses réformes, de donner du pain à 9 millions de personnes...
2. qu'il est ensuite social: il faut multiplier les médecins et les écoles.
3. Qu'il est enfin, psychologique: vous vous rappelez De Man

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140. Ibid. p.1372.

141. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p.367.

avec son "complexe d'infériorité" de la classe ouvrière. Il avait trouvé du même coup la clé du "caractère indigène": mal traité, mal nourri, illettré, l'Algérien a un complexe d'infériorité vis-à-vis de ses maîtres.[142]

Sartre realised that what was missing in the heart of the matter was the political dimension and this political and social economy was planned by French administration. He went on to argue that:

Nous, Français de la métropole, nous n'avons qu'une leçon à tirer de ces faits: le colonialisme est en train de se détruire lui - même...Notre rôle, c'est de l'aider à mourir. Non seulement en Algérie, mais partout où il existe. Les gens qui parlent d'abandon sont des imbéciles: il n'y a pas à abandonner, ce que nous n'avons jamais possédé. Il s'agit tout au contraire de construire avec les Algériens des relations nouvelles entre une France libre et une Algérie libérée.[143]

In the meantime he attacked the "neo-colonizing nation" proposed by the partisans of an intermediary solution. He went further by asserting that: "Car il n'est pas vrai qu'il y ait de bons colons (settlers or pied-noir) et d'autres qui soient méchants"[144] and he insisted that: "il y a des colons, c'est tout".[145] Also, Sartre pointed out that during the nineteenth century, the French administration and the "pied-noir" had used a variety of legal deceptions in order to rob the Algerians of all the best land, mainly in the North (Metidja region). French industry found it difficult to compete in World markets, making it all the more important to develop and exploit the best land in the North.

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142. Sartre, "Le Colonialisme est un système", Les Temps Modernes, No 123, 1956, p.1371.

143. Ibid, p.1386.

144. Ibid, p.1372.

145. Ibid, p.1372.

Le système colonial est en place: L'État Français livre la terre arabe (Algerians) au colons pour leur créer un pouvoir d'achat qui permette aux industriels métropolitains de leur vendre leurs produits,[146] and where:

"Les colons (pied-noir) vendent au marchés de la métropole les fruits de cette terre volée".[147]

It seemed that Sartre could no longer believe in his earlier illusion in which he assumed that the First World War was the last War; as he declared:

We had lived since the end of World War I with the illusion that it was the last. That is, we thought of the social problems that arose in the twenties and thirties as so many minor upheavals of no real consequence, since indeed we were moving toward peace, and peace was assumed as part of the total picture...We envisaged a Germany that in the not too distant future would be democratic. And...firmly believed that other forces would come into play which would overwhelm the forces of reaction, and thereby we would come to a political understanding.[148]

Perhaps Sartre took the view that colonialism must be defeated, not as Simone de Beauvoir thought, because of "humanitarianism or any other such moral abstraction"[149], but for more concrete reasons and because:

We ourselves were in peril, and if Hitler was not crushed, France would suffer more or less the same fate as Austria..."Surely France at war would be worse than France under the Nazis?"[150]

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146. Ibid, p.1376.

147. Ibid, p.1376.

148. Sartre by himself, p.48.

149. Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, p.358.

150. Ibid, p.358.

Later, in his Critique of Dialectical Reason, Sartre explained how the primary violence of the nineteenth century was given to the contemporary oppressors a "hell of the practico-inerte"[151] which must be ceaselessly maintained by their individual and group praxes, as he affirmed that:

...it is also true that these sons of violence (that is of the pied-noir-settlers) are produced by the violent praxis of their fathers - which sends us back to history which we wanted to flee...in new conditions where exploitation must depend on oppression, this violence renews itself...it must re-express itself in order to maintain itself...it becomes its own idea under the form of racism. Or, in other words, the settlers actualize at each instant, the practices of extermination, of robbery and of exploitation inaugurated by the preceding generations...the victory of arms does not suffice; it must be renewed each day.[152]

I shall discuss in the next chapter how Sartre's position gradually evolved on the Algerian revolution, mainly on the issue of torture. This work proposes to recall the circumstances of Sartre's personal involvement and discuss the reflections of the conflict in his political writings.

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151. It should be pointed out that Sartre felt it is necessary to reinterpret the meaning of "No Exit," which he had discussed earlier in his play Huis-Clos (1943), in Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960), "Hell is the practico-inerte". He claimed that hell is the situation which others have set up for the individual. Hell is the world into which the individual was born, and also it is where the individuals must live.

152. Sartre, Critique de la Raison Dialectique, pp.675-679.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **THE POWER OF THE FRENCH ARMY AND THE ATTITUDE OF JEAN-PAUL SARTRE TOWARDS THE TORTURE INFLICTED IN ALGERIA.**

- (a) The Power of the French Army in Algeria.
- (b) Sartre and the Tortured Algerians.



We had attacked, we the slaves, we the dung underfoot, we the animals with patient hooves. We were running like madmen; shots rang out...we were striking where the shouting came from, and the shouts became more strident and a great clamour rose from the east; it was the outhouses burning and the flames flickered sweetly on our cheeks. Then the assaults made on the master's house. They were firing from the windows. We broke in the doors. The master's room was wide open. The master's room was brilliantly lighted, and the master was there, very calm...And our people stopped dead...it was the master...I went in. "It is you", he said, very calm. It was I, even I, and I told him so, the good slave, the faithful slave, the slave of slaves, and suddenly his eyes were like two cockroaches, frightened in the rainy season...I struck, and the blood spurted; that is the only baptism I remember today.

Aimé Césaire, Les Armes Miraculeuses,

(Paris: N.R.F., Gallimard, 1970)

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I shall attempt to discuss the atrocities of the French Army in Algeria and how France waged her war in her colonized country. With the transfer of power to the French military forces in Algeria, torturing, killing indiscriminately, and shooting for "fun" became normal to the French soldiers in Algeria; this point will be discussed at length in both sections.

In the next section of this chapter I shall examine the development of Sartre's writings towards the torture inflicted in Algeria, and I will consolidate his position with the eye witnesses on torture, such as Henri Alleg, Sergeant Pierre Leulliete, Djamila Boupacha, and other Algerians.

### **(a) THE POWER OF THE FRENCH ARMY IN ALGERIA**

Besides the "pied-noir" and the Algerian Moslems there was a third political entity in Algeria; the French Army which gave the country one appearance: that of war. There was a huge number of soldiers occupying Algeria: "Régiment Etranger Parachutistes" (REP), "Régiment Parachutistes Colonial" (RPC), "Régiment de Chasseurs Parachutistes" (RCP), etc... In each "Mechta", "Douar", and "willaya" there were more soldiers than civilians in the streets, especially during their operations. Both the Algerian Moslems and the "pied-noir" remained in their homes most of the time, frightened of death. The Algerians feared the French Army which killed indiscriminately and the "pied-noir" were frightened of the FLN's vengeance. In the streets the French soldiers could be seen pointing their weapons at every Algerian they met. Because the executions of the ALN were held in public and the French Army forced the people into the

streets to attend, the Algerians preferred to remain indoors.[1]

Although Guy Mollet, the secretary-general of the Socialist Party (SFIO)\* won a vote of confidence in the National Assembly, and became Prime Minister in February 1956, he was having trouble within the Socialist Party at its congress which was held in Lille. Its members demanded a ceasefire and negotiation in Algeria.[2] It should be pointed out that when Mollet took office, one of his first moves was to announce Soustelle's replacement by the seventy-nine year old General Georges Catroux, the wartime High Commissioner in Algiers, who was later replaced by Robert Lacoste. Lacoste was ideally suited for the post of Governor-General of Algeria. He had joined the French resistance during the Second World War when his father was shot as a hostage by the Nazis, and had dealt with industrial and economic affairs in the former government. His favourite expression was "je ne me laisse pas emmerder" as he said later in Algiers to the American journalist Edward Behr:

"Je ne vous demande qu'une seule chose, à vous autres journalistes étrangers: C'est de bien vouloir ne pas venir nous emmerder".[3]

Neither Soustelle nor Lacoste could stop the horror of war, as Ferhat Abbas put it:

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\* SFIO: Section Française de L'Internationale Ouvrière.

1. John E. Talbott, "The Myth and Reality of the Paratrooper in the Algerian War", Armed Forces and Society, 1976, Vol. 3, No. 1, p.77.
2. Le Monde, May 18, 1956, p.4.
3. Edward Behr, The Algerian Problem, p.101.

Le ciel Algérien restait plein d'orages. Ni Soustelle, ni Lacoste n'avaient pu désamorcer la situation et rapprocher les deux communautés. En faisant le jeu des "ultras" contre les libéraux Français et contre le FLN, les représentants du pouvoir central avaient éloigné l'heure de la réconciliation et de la paix.[4]

All thoughts of negotiation and ceasefire were soon forgotten, and the tempo of the war increased, as Mendès France had promised before the election of the National Assembly 1956. Above all else:

The first duty of the government that will be formed after the election will be to reestablish peace in North Africa. What we must do before anything else is to stop lying, to stop falling into the same old errors of Indo-China, Morocco and Tunisia. Of course, we must protect the Algerian populations, but we must stop all this blind and insane repression.[5]

The Socialist Prime Minister Guy Mollet's aim was to commit France more completely to the suppression of the Algerian revolution than either of his predecessors, and to establish a course of action that was not to be changed before de Gaulle came to power. The total number of the French Army fighting in Algeria exceeded 500,000 men, with many of the crack military units coming from NATO, while 150,000 others waited in Morocco, and 20,000 in Tunisia. The French military forces were now using conscripts in Algeria, which they had never done in Indo-China. In addition to the strength of the French Army there were the NATO bases in North Africa, particularly in Algeria, France being a member, with the use of NATO's equipment. There were many NATO military bases in the

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4. Ferhat Abbas, Autopsie d'une Guerre, p.223.

5. Cited in A. Werth, The Strange History of Mendès France, (London: Barrie, 1957), p.395.

Sahara and on the Algerian coast. Thus, the French Army in Algeria scented victory in the war which they could not lose, because of the huge numbers of their men and arms, and because of the many battles they had won during their operations, by shooting indiscriminately, burning villages, torturing people, and killing for "fun". As the eye witness account reported:

**Arabs (Algerians) shot down "for the fun of it", prisoners brutally murdered, villages burned, mass executions etc...[6]**

Now let us discuss the most important events which seemed to give the hope of victory to the French Army in Algeria. First, the Battle of Algiers in 1956, won by the French paratroops, but which gave an international hope to the FLN, as we shall see later. For the Algerian people, it was comprehensible and logical to react by making "attentats" and exploding bombs at the French military targets: that was the only way to defend themselves against the colonial regime, but the French considered it as terrorist action against innocent people. However, when the Battle of Algiers took place, Robert Lacoste gave orders to close down the FLN's network by using all the military forces in the city to Colonel Yves Godard, Chief of Staff of the Tenth Parachutist Division, General Raoul Salan, Commander-in-Chief of the elite of the division, and General Jacques Massu, the Tenth Division commander, who in effect took over as police chief of Algiers. He had experience in West Africa and with the Free French forces, and later in Indo-China and Suez. In 1955, he had been promoted General, at the age of 47. Massu, who had a reputation as a warrior, reminded observers of one of Napoleon's Imperial guards.

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6. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, Lieutenant in Algeria. Translated by Ronald Mathews (New York: Knopf, 1957), p.30.

Robert Lacoste informed those generals that there were more than 1500 police in Algiers under pressure from the FLN terrorists since the outbreak of the revolution. Therefore, the defeat of the FLN's underground was one of the positive moves towards the victory of the French in Algeria. The army tried to fill the increasing administrative void in Algiers in accordance with the decisions of Lacoste, and the military shouldered ever-increasing responsibilities. Immediately, the army created a new "Section Administrative Spécialisée" (SAS) (Special Administrative Section) and "Détachements Operationnels de Protection" (DOP) (the Secret Police Detachments) within the army in order to control the area of Algiers. Later this practice was followed not only in Algiers but all over Algeria. Thus, the result of this increasingly political administrative emphasis was that:

...on the verge of the crisis of May 1958, the army had not only supplanted civil administration in districts where the latter were incapable of handling the job, but the precepts of revolutionary war had also taken over from old colonial traditions, extending and developing them.[7]

When the FLN organized a strike against French colonization in Algiers for eight days, which lasted from January 28, to February 4, 1957, General Massu replied by declaring his intention to act as a strikebreaker. By threats, invitations, and coercion the French military forced or induced Algerian workers to return to their jobs and Moslem children to their schools, and the paratroops forcibly reopened Algerian shops. The army claimed that they had succeeded in breaking the strike, and the Algerians

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7. Raoul Girardet, Changing Patterns of Military Politics (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1962), p.139.

agreed in order to gain international support, and to organize themselves to counter the new colonization.

After the strike the French paratroops organized their intelligence network in the whole city, with checkpoints in the streets, barbed-wire barriers and armed patrols. The French soldiers searched night and day in order to find out the structure of the clandestine organization, patrols moving from door to door. Torture was the army's response to the people of Algiers, as we shall see in the next section. Let us look at one of the FLN heroes of the Casba area (the poorest area in Algiers where most of the Algerians lived), Ali La Pointe, who became something of a folk hero for the Algerian masses. Before the outbreak of the revolution, Ali La Pointe had been a sometime pimp and foot soldier in the organized clandestine crime of the city. In his book Le Temps des Léopards, Yves Courrière observed:

The knowledge that Ali had of the underworld of the Casbah was of considerable value to Yacef (Yacef Saâdi, head of the autonomous FLN network in Algiers, 1955-1957). He knows everyone, the bistros, the informers, the gamblers, the pimps, the whores. He had worked for all the important gangs, including that of "Vincent the Scorpion Fish" (Vincent La Rascass) and that of Joe Menella. He knows them all, and they know him. But Ali La Pointe doesn't want to be in anyone's service. He works as an "independent". But for the first time, he has found a leader: Yacif Saâdi. He is ready to follow him to the ends of the earth. This uncouth being who believed in neither God nor the Devil had found a cause, to which he devoted himself with exaltation. Whatever Yacef asked of him, Ali would do, faithfully and coldly. The team of Ali La Pointe and Yacef was thus constituted. It would be heard from.[8]

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8. Yves Courrière, Le Temps des Léopards (Paris: Fayard, 1969), p.238.

It will be very interesting for Yves Courrière to add to his observation that the reason why Ali La Pointe was faithful to the FLN leader in Algiers, though he was an illiterate person, was that he started hating the French people in Algeria when he witnessed the scene of the decapitation of Moslems in the prison called "El-Finga" by a machine which the Algerians feared during the war.[9]

In Algiers the leadership of the FLN was forced to change hands, names, and forms in the ensuing years. The CCE had to flee Algiers and to establish itself in Tunis. Between October 1957 and February 1961, Algiers was nearly free of political violence. It should be pointed out that the Battle of Algiers was the most important step in the French Army's identification with the cause of "L'Algérie Française". Later, Massu became a special hero, and regimental officers socialized with the "pied-noir" elite in Algiers.[10]

The war was not only in Algiers, as might be expected, but also all over Algeria. Indeed, the war outside Algiers was going very much in favour of the ALN, as they had considerably extended the areas under their control in the east and west, and they dominated most of the "djebels" (mountainous regions) of the country, particularly the Aurès and Kabylia between November 1954 and 1958, perhaps because funds and arms could be supplied regularly to these areas from Tunisia and Morocco.

With the arms and funds supplied by both countries, the number of

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9. Film, La Bataille d'Alger, 1966 (Film-maker, Gillo Pontecorvo [Italian]).
  10. L'Echo d'Alger, January 2, 1957, p.3.



"El-Moudjahidine"\* had increased since the outbreak of the revolution. The French government decided to build an electrified fence, which was called the "Morice line" (named after miner of Defence) after General Morice Challe who had drawn its plan along the Tunisian-Algerian border and which threatened to cut off Tunisia as the main source of supply. In September 1957, the French completed an imposing "Cordon Sanitaire" the length of the Tunisian border. The Morice line was a barrier of modern military technology which was built from the sea to the empty Sahara along the Tunisian frontier for more than two hundred miles. The nucleus of the line was a ten-foot electric fence charged with five thousand volts; on both sides was barbed-wire similar to the style of the First World War as described by one French conscript: "An immense serpent in the style of Bernard Buffet." Defending the line was most important to the French military forces; there were more than 85,000 soldiers on the Algerian-Tunisian frontier, the most powerful concentration of French combat troops in Algeria.[11]

By the beginning of 1958, the French had completed another barbed-wire barrier, this time along the Moroccan-Algerian border - with the same equipment as the first. The French Army posts were now strengthened; being electrified and equipped with radar and alarm systems. Further, they were made more secure by reserves in the rear. In Tunisia there

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\* "El-Moudjahidine", singular of "El-Moudjahid". In Arabic this term means rebel fighting in a holy war in the Islam religion. But in the Algerian dialect there is no difference between the terms rebels and "El-Moudjahidine", both of them mean soldiers of ALN. In this thesis I used these words to mean the same thing. But I have started with the use of rebel in the second chapter because the Algerians used it in the first year of the war, then "El-Moudjahide" and later "El-Djaïch".

11. Alistair Horne, A Savage War of Peace, p.230.

were approximately 15,000 Algerian men and 10,000 in Morocco who were receiving military training and carrying out raids, though the transport of supplies to Algeria had been cut off, and major breakthroughs were effectively stopped. In spite of the Morice line, the sinister triumph of military technology and of the strength of the French paratroops on the frontier, the ALN troops, tried out new techniques and they had ordered high-tension wire-cutters from Germany. Many diversionary tactics were tried in an attempt to pass under the line. They created breakthrough units in Tunisia, which were trained in the execution of forced marches at astonishing speeds. They even had the notion of transporting arms and funds by camels across the Sahara. But it was impossible for them to break down the line, and the cost in deaths grew higher and higher. According to the 9th RCP, there were more than 6,000 men killed in seven months in 1958.

In Algeria itself the French Army had regrouped. Electrified barbed wire fences and land-mines encircled each barracks and village, as well as blocking the main streets of the cities and villages. The "El-Moudjahidine" had to retaliate and attack French military targets; they had to continue their hit-and-run tactics with which they had harried the French Army so often during the last two years. The country was covered with fortified posts and French troops were permanently assigned to the region with the tasks of policing and patrolling. Furthermore, there were mobile units for fighting the political-military FLN organization, regrouping the civilian population, and organizing it for self-defence. In addition, there was the general reserve of the French Army besides the soldiers who were fighting permanently, mainly paratroops and "Legionnaires" (the parachute regiment of the foreign legion (REP) most of those soldiers were Europeans and French African troops), well

equipped with helicopters, aircraft and artillery, etc...[12]

It should be noted that militarily the new concept of the French Army in Algeria was immensely successful. As each area was divided between the paratroops and "legionnaires", the operation became limited, and they operated in small units, as the Germans had often done in Russia during the Second World War (even their name - "commandos de chasse" - was a translation of the German "Jagdkommandos"). They broke up the battalions which they had only recently enlarged to a strength of 600 soldiers and replaced them by units of 100 men. Thus, the French Army and the military advisors of NATO in Algeria, had made sure that the ALN would not succeed in building up regular forces and confront them with a Dien Bien Phu situation which was regarded as a military disaster not only for France but also for Western countries. As the frontier barriers stopped the flow of weapons and supplies to the "El-Moudjahidine", the French Army in Algeria became stronger and stronger. Besides, barracks and military enclosures, there were soldiers tents everywhere surrounded by tanks and under observation by helicopters and aircraft.[13]

When the FLN lost more soldiers in breaking through the Morice line, they decided to build many base-camps for the ALN on the Tunisia-Algeria frontier. Among these camps was Sakiet Sidi Youcef, a small village in Tunisia, from where the "El-Moudjahidine" had attacked the French paratroops inside Algeria, and had shot down an investigating French plane. It should be noted that it was not the first time that the ALN had launched attacks on the French troops from Tunisia. On several occasions between 1957 and 1958, French troops had pursued "El-Moudjahidine" into Tunisian territory, with casualties recorded on both

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12. Peter Paret, French Revolutionary Warfare from Indo-China to Algeria (London, Dunmow: Pall Mall Press, 1964), p.35.

13. Ibid, p.36.

sides. The Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, warned the French troops to stay out of his country, while the French government repeatedly warned Tunisia that further border violations would incite retaliation. The French government in Paris was aware of the role Tunisia was playing in the FLN's military success.[14] When retaliation did come, however, in the form of a surprise attack on a small Tunisian village, it served only to enlarge the crisis and also internationalize it.

In the early morning of 8th February 1958, another investigating French plane was hit by ALN from Sakiet base and had to make a forced landing behind the Morice line. Three hours later the French military, taking matters into its own hands, and according to the authorities in Paris not securing permission from them,[15] dispatched 25 Air Force planes (American-built B-26 bombers) to bomb the Tunisian village of Sakiet-Sidi Youcef on the Algerian-Tunisian border, as they had several times to the Algerian villages. It was Saturday morning - a market day and most of the people were out on the streets. Many people were killed, most of them women and children. The Algerian refugee camp, hospital, schools, mosques, houses, were all destroyed according to the Red Cross, visiting the area that day and witness to the event.[16]

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14. Jacques Soustelle, Voici Pourquoi. (A fortnightly review critical of the government and strong in its defence of "L'Algérie Française". It had begun publication in November 1957. Soustelle was its political editor and chief inspiration).
  15. According to Jean Ferniot, De Gaulle et le 13 Mai, (Paris: Plon, 1965), pp.15-3. Minister of Defence Chaban-Delmas, Resident Minister of Algeria Robert Lacoste, and Foreign Minister Pineau were not informed of the raid beforehand.
  16. Yves Courrière, La Guerre d'Algérie, 4 Volumes:
    - (1) Les Fils de la Toussaint (Paris: Fayard, 1968), p.584.
    - (2) Le Temps des Léopards (Paris: Fayard, 1969).
    - (3) L'Heure des Colonels (Paris: Fayard, 1970).
    - (4) Les Feux du Désespoir. La Fin d'un Empire (Paris: Fayard, 1971).

It should be pointed out that after the Sakiet Sidi-Youcef bombing, Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba withdrew his ambassador to France and began preparations to take the matter to the United Nations. He also demanded an immediate evacuation of the 20,000 French troops still stationed in Tunisia. Undoubtedly, the French government countercharged, claiming that Tunisia was to blame since it had been warned many times that further aid to the Algerian FLN would result in retaliation from France.

The French military forces were strong in Algeria compared with the ALN, but the government in France was politically weak. Contrarily, the FLN was militarily weak in Algeria but politically strong in the exterior. Earlier, on October 22, 1956, the external delegation of the FLN, Ahmed Ben-Bella and three other organizers of the All Saints rising, Mohamed Boudiaf, Hocine Ait Ahmed, Mohamed Khider, and Mustapha Lacheraf, an Algerian professor who wrote a few articles about Algerian nationalism in Les Temps Modernes, left Rabat for Tunis in a DC-3 belonging to Air-Maroc, with a French crew. On approaching Algerian territory, the French pilot received radio orders from Oran in the name of the French high command; the Moroccan plane was diverted from its course and forced to land in Algiers. With no chance to resist, the FLN leaders were arrested and transported to France, where they remained imprisoned for five and a half years. It was said that they were given the status of political prisoners, but they were never brought to trial.[17] The four leaders were imprisoned in a French fortress on the Île d'Aix, off the Atlantic coast of France. In defending this pirate act, Robert Lacoste said

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17. John Talbott, The War Without A Name: France in Algeria, 1954-1962 (London: Faber & Faber, 1980), p.72.

that: "C'est formidable! Quelle histoire! C'est une affaire du tonnerre de Dieu."[18] But René Coty was against Lacoste's decision and he emphasized that: "Celui qui à ordonné cette connerie nous fera perdre la guerre d'Algérie."[19] (Indeed they lost it because of their terrorist activities).

In Algeria the "pied-noir" still had their slogan of "L'Algérie Française" and the French Army came up with the idea of "integration" by any means - including torture, brainwashing, oppressive propaganda, and destroying human dignity. They claimed that they were responsible for these actions in order to reorganize the population from top to bottom as Colonel Roger Trinquier, one of the leading Indo-China hands, said in one of his interviews with an associated Press correspondent in September 1958. He declared that:

...you can call me a fascist if you like, but our aim is to make the population docile and everyone's actions must be controlled.[20]

The French government in Paris seemed to encourage the aim of the "pied-noir" and the army in Algeria. Robert Lacoste himself delegated full administrative and police powers to General Massu by administrative decree. Jean-Marie Domenach, the editor of the left-wing Catholic review, Esprit, described the situation as follows:

Their "war of ideas" required a single idea, fixed and clear. From this position the army arrived somewhat experimentally at political action. Its chiefs sensed that the old principles of patriotism and discipline were not enough to set up

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18. Quoted from J. R. Tournoux, "Secréts d'Etat" in F. Abbas Autopsie d'une Guerre, p.187.

19. Ibid, p.187.

20. Quoted in Edward Behr, The Algerian Problem, p.138.

against "subversive warfare"; and in order to fulfil their mission they demanded that the state define a policy and hold to it. As the state was weak and divided, the army naturally substituted itself for the state; in its ten years of continuous combat it had worked out a coherent conception of permanent interests and of the objectives of guerilla war.[21]

According to Resident Minister Robert Lacoste, the figure of Algerians dead given to the National Assembly from November 1954 to December 31st 1956 was officially totalled at 23,189, of whom 3,876 had "disappeared". Losses inflicted by the French military forces were put at 17,784 killed. Further, General Salan made a statement to a press conference that 700 rebels were killed during military operations in the period from January 28 to February 5. In one day (February 8) 130 civilians were killed; 216 died between the 9th and 10th February. On March 2-3, 1957, Reuter reported that French security forces killed 267 insurgents and captured 478 during the weekend. On March 5, the correspondent of the Manchester Guardian reported that there had been 10 killed and 13 wounded in a terrorist attack and 137 rebels killed in military operations.[22] It should be pointed out that the French soldiers were fully equipped with the most modern weapons of warfare, and in 1957 the government had spent more than £400,000,000 on military operations in Algeria in order to reduce the number of the ALN. Moreover, in the budget of the French government in 1958, there were 600m allocated to Algeria.

The French paratroops were killing not only "El-Moudjahidine" as

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21. Jean-Marie Domenach, "The French Army in Politics", Foreign Affairs, Vol. 39, 1960-61, p.189.
  22. "The Algerian Bloodbath", Selected Articles - Freedom, Vol. 4-10, 1954-60 (March, 1957), pp.55-7.

might be expected, they were also killing people indiscriminately, women, children, and old men. They were burning villages, palms, fields, and forests, thinking that the ALN were camping there. As the eye witness, Pierre Leulliette, Sergeant in the French military forces during the Algerian War, reported in his book St. Michael and the Dragon:

We went back. The village below seemed perfectly calm. The population rushed over to help us, bringing us food and water...We searched a few "Mechtas" mechanically, though we were tired of repeating the same actions again and again. In the back of a small miserable hut, we found a vast white-and-green FLN flag...A quarter of an hour later, all the "Mechtas" around the one where we found the flag were in ashes.[23]

According to Sergeant Leulliette, killing, torturing, burning villages and forests, and searching everywhere became normal to the French Army in Algeria. They even shot Algerian civilians for "fun" in the street, and capturing "El-Moudjahidine" became an amusement for the French paratroops. He witnessed that:

In a hut, wedged between two large slabs of rock, we prised out two women...Both wore a kind of sand-coloured pilot's uniform and on their chests the green and white badge of the FLN..."they say that they are prisoners of war, that they won't talk, and that they'll complain (Perhaps they said that according to the Geneva Convention)...The little lieutenant, bright red with anger, went on yelling: "Kill her! Go on, kill her!"...He fired five bullets in succession into the woman's crumpled body...First, two bullets in the middle of her chest; then three in her belly. She died without a sound.[24]

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23. Pierre Leulliette, St. Michael and the Dragon: A Paratrooper in the Algerian War. Translated by Tony White (London: Heinemann, 1964), p.262.

24. Ibid, pp.251-3



In addition to this savagery and barbarism, Ferhat Abbas also in his part reported that:

"A nouveau c'est le massacre. Plus de 100 cadavres restent sur la chaussée. Il faudrait aussi parler des morts de Medea écrasés par les chars ou dévorés par les chiens policiers".[25]

and he added that:

"L'Algérie Musulmane déchirée, blessée, humiliée, définitivement engagée dans la guerre..."[26]

It should be noted that among those burned villages, the author's "Dechera",\* Ouled Amrane, "Douar" Tamza in the North-East of Algeria, was completely destroyed by the French Air Force in 1957. Most of the people escaped to other "Mechtas" when aircraft started bombing our "Dechera", more than 17 people were killed and most of them were old men and women. The number of wounded people was higher. Among those who were killed were seven from my family, "Ouled Amrane", four men and three women. The attack was designed to exterminate the "Ouled Amrane" family because most of them were "Moudjahidine"; there were 42 of them in the ALN. The author's father El-Hadi was a leader of the "cellule" of the ALN in Tamza and Aurès mountains. He conducted many military operations with his soldiers and was promoted and had been given the third part of the Aurès area to control. In 1957, he was killed on a military operation with most of his soldiers in the forests called

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\* Dechera: smaller than a "Mechta" in the countryside, usually most of the people who lived there were "Fellah" - peasants.

25. Ferhat Abbas, Autopsie d'une guerre, p. 196.

26. Ibid, p.197.

"Ghabet El-Beradja" in the South-East of Aurès area.[27] As might be expected, all 42 "Moudjahidine" were killed during the Algerian War. Today streets, roads, and institutions have been named in honour of Amrani's "chouhada" (martyrs) killed in the Algerian revolution.

Now let us take a bird's-eye view of the FLN's political movements and how they had started the War in France. The FLN realized that the revolution would have to continue in order to free Algeria from French colonization. For the first time since November 1954, the FLN's internal leaders of "Willayate" met in Soummam, in the North of Algeria in order to create party institutions and to settle the important outstanding questions. The form and structure of leadership was essential to the FLN's wartime development in the Soummam Valley Congress which was held on August 20, 1956:

The Soummam Congress...constituted the most important event in the history of the FLN. It was from this congress that the relations of the front were defined with the trade unionists of the UGTA and the students of the UGEMA. It was there also that the ALN could draw lessons from twenty months of war and finally establish the political objectives of the revolution.[28]

The Soummam Congress had been planned by Ramdane Abane, the new chief of "Willaya" IV, and the interior leaders while all the exterior delegations were still outside the country. The FLN created the first political institution the "Conseil National de la Révolution Algérienne" (CNRA), the wartime parliamentary legislative body of the party. Besides

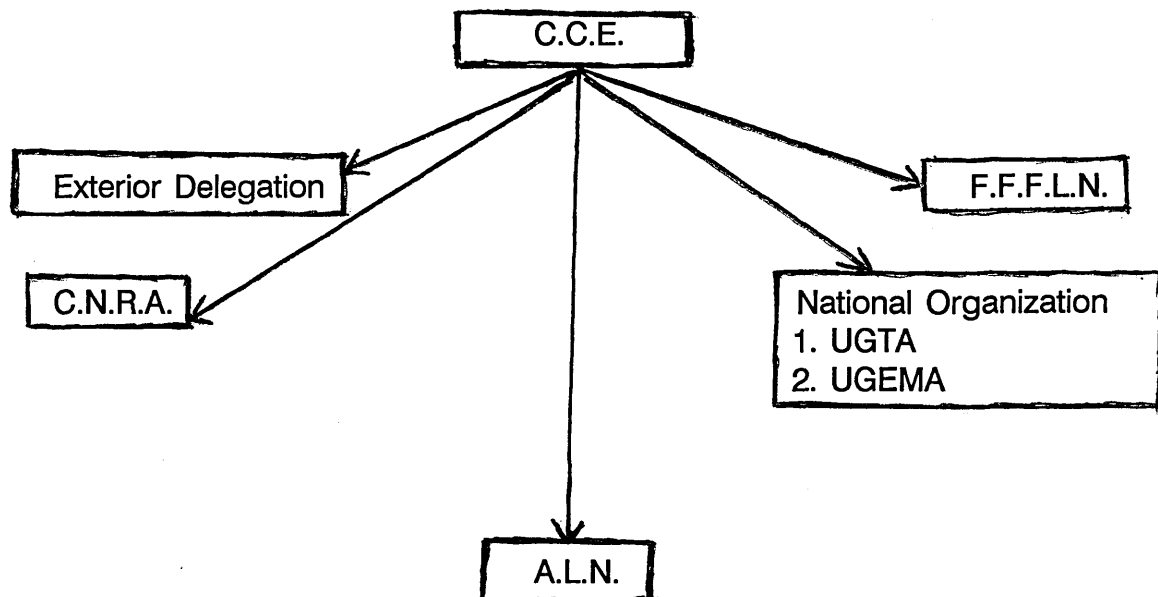
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27. Belkacem Drardja, in Achaâb, November 14, 1974. (The daily Arabic newspaper of the FLN party in Algeria). See also more information about the "Douar" Tamza tragedy during the Algerian War in Djamila Amrane's research in Le Retentissement De la Révolution Algérienne (Colloque international d'Alger: 24-28 Novembre 1984) [Centre National d'Études Historiques] Edited by Mohamed Touili (Algiers and Brussels: Enal, Gam 1985), pp.90-108.
28. Jacques Duchemin, Histoire du FLN (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1962), p.179.

this organization, they had created another one in France called "La Fédération de France du FLN" (FFFLN), which was named later "La 7E Willaya". The aim of this congress was as follows:

The doctrine is clear. National independence is the goal, and the means to its attainment is revolution destroying the colonial regime.[29]

The components of the FLN after the Soummam Congress are shown in the figure below.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FLN AS FORMED AT THE  
SOUMMAM VALLEY CONGRESS  
AUGUST 20, 1956.



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29. Le Front de Libération Nationale. La Plateforme de la Révolution Algérienne. (Resolutions of the Soummam Valley Congress, August

As we have seen, the French military forces were too strong in Algeria for the ALN to counter them. The results of the French military victory from November 1954 to 1958 can be listed as follows: (1) the hastening of the FLN's disintegration by the building of the Morice line on the Algerian-Moroccan-Tunisian frontiers; (2) the winning of the Battle of Algiers by torturing and killing people; (3) the success of military operations, bombing and burning villages and forests throughout Algeria; (4) the hijack of the leaders of the exterior delegation; (5) shooting in the streets for "fun" and killing people indiscriminately became normal to the French paratroops in Algeria. At this point, the FLN decided to carry out actions in France. Indeed, this was its strategy of physically extending the war to the mother country. In his book Vérités sur la Révolution Algérienne, Mohamed Lebjaoui stated that:

"...to carry the war to France, so that the French should discover just how painful the war was."[30]

In August 1958, the FLN moved their place of operations from Algeria to metropolitan France. Fires broke out, many policemen were attacked in the streets by Algerians; on August 24 alone, four policemen in Paris were killed by the FLN. Lebjaoui led the organization of the "attentat" in France, which was "spectacularly successful", in collecting funds and recruiting volunteers, particularly deserters from the French Army. They also tried to avenge, by burning down the forest of the "Bois de Boulogne" in Paris, the burning of many forests in Algeria. To this extent, the FLN committed a spectacular series of acts of violence; gas storage tanks set alight in Marseille, and policemen killed in Paris. The

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30. Mohamed Lebjaoui, Vérités sur la Révolution Algérienne (Paris: N.R.F., Gallimard, 1970), p.81.

FLN's activities reached their highest on September 15, when there was an attempt on Jacques Soustelle's life; Soustelle, who supported "L'Algérie Française" and gave the order to the French paratroops in Algiers to torture people in order to attain his goals, and who asserted when he was in Algeria as Governor-General:

**"L'abandon de l'Algérie serait un crime, et un crime qui ne paierait pas".[31]**

At about 9.45 am as his chauffeur-driven car approached his office on the Avenue Friedland, near the Étoile, two armed Algerians attacked the car.[32] Soustelle escaped with a small cut on his face, and two bullet holes in his jacket. Undaunted by the attack, Soustelle appeared later that day for a press conference. He stated:

**"This attempt demonstrates once more that the FLN, despairing of winning the game, has resorted to the most criminal measures".[33]**

In France itself, "L'Algérie Française" propaganda had always insisted that Algeria would be lost only because the French government was too ineffective in opposing the rebellion. When, because of the weakness of the government, the military insurrection occurred in May, 1958, the Socialists refused to work with Communists and with De Gaulle. As former Prime Minister Guy Mollet put it:

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31. Jacques Soustelle, Le Drame Algérien et la Décadence Française: Réponse à Raymond Aron. (Paris: Plon, 1957), p.26.
  32. Ali Haroun, La 7<sup>E</sup> Wilaya: La Guerre du FLN en France 1954-1962 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1986), p.210.
  33. Le Monde, September 20, 1958, p.3.

The police, army, and administration were en route. Organize the vast and intense popular reaction? Of course, this is what we wanted to do. Throughout an entire night, representatives of the free labour unions came through my office. The result of our consultations was clear: the working class, not because of softness, but because of incomprehension, would stay quiet; they were not ready to fight for this disqualified form of government, this impotent republic.[34]

It should be pointed out here that Mollet seemed to agree with the diagnosis of the problem made by the supporters of "L'Algérie Française" in dividing the government; the hope of "La plus grande France de Dunkerque à Tamanrasset" lost him supporters.

#### (b) SARTRE AND THE TORTURED ALGERIANS

Now let us see the torture in Algeria. First, let me briefly explain what the term torture means. Torture as explained in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: is "the act of causing someone to feel severe pain, done out of cruelty, as a punishment, etc..."[35] but torture seems to have been known to all societies of the ancient world with the possible exception of the Hebrews. In ancient Greece, for instance, prisoners of war were liable to be tortured. But in the eighteenth century, Voltaire pointed out concerning torture that:

...There is a natural comparison in the human heart, which makes all men detest the cruelty of torturing the accused in order to extort confession...Possibly Thou mayst be innocent; but I will torture Thee that I may be satisfied: not that I intend to make Thee recompense for the thousands deaths which I have made Thee suffer, in lieu of that which is preparing for Thee.[36]

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- 34. Guy Mollet, 13 Mai 1958 - 13 Mai 1962 (Paris: Plon, 1962), p.97.
  - 35. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Essex, 1982), p.1170.
  - 36. Quoted in Malise Ruthven, Torture, the Great Conspiracy (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), p. 13.

But Edward Peters said that torture was the: "torment and suffering of the body in order to elicit the truth"[37] At the time of the French-Algerian war, prohibitions against torture had been condoned but the act was still not defined. However, the universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 set out an early prohibition: "no-one shall be subjected to torture or to degrading treatment or punishment"[38] Later, torture was defined in the Geneva Conventions in force during the Algerian war:

Persons...shall in all circumstances be treated humanely...To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever...Violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment, and torture...[39]

But for Sartre, torture during the Algerian War "...n'est ni civile, ni militaire, ni spécifiquement Française: C'est une vérole qui ravage l'époque entière.[40] Before discussing Sartre's attitude towards the torture inflicted in Algeria it will be useful to know first how Sartre gradually became involved with the tortured Algerians.

Earlier in the first issue of Les Temps Modernes which appeared shortly after the liberation of France, Sartre recalled his own comment as follows:

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37. Edward Peters, Torture, (New York, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985) p.1.
  38. General Assembly Resolution 217A (111), December 10, 1948, U.N. Doc. A/810 at 7/1948.
  39. Basic rules of the Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols, Edited by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, 1983, pp.52-3.
  40. Sartre, "Une Victoire", Situations, V, p.80.

Aujourd'hui, les choses en sont venues à ce point que l'on a vu des écrivains, blâmés ou punis parce qu'ils ont loué leur plume aux Allemands, faire montre d'un étonnement douloureux. "Eh quoi? disent-ils, ça engage donc, ce qu'on écrit?"[41]

Furthermore, Sartre attempted to define the theoretical orientation of the review and consequently the social responsibility of the intellectuals, as he stated:

En résumé, notre intention est de concourir à produire certains changements dans la société..., nous nous rangeons du côté de ceux qui veulent changer à la fois la condition sociale de l'homme et la conception qu'il a de lui-même.[42]

In order to attain this goal, intellectuals needed a different conception of their own role than the commonly accepted ones. Sartre argued that intellectuals are not "above" the affairs of society, or members of a "quasi-monastic" order divorced from "temporal" consideration:

"pour nous, en effet, l'écrivain n'est ni Vestale, ni Ariel: il est "dans le coup", quoi qu'il fasse, marqué, comprimé, jusque dans sa plus lointaine retraite".[43]

For Sartre, the intellectual must accept this social responsibility not just as any other private citizen, but as one with higher opportunity to affect public opinion, as he affirmed:

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41. Sartre, "Présentation" Les Temps Modernes, No.1, Vol. 1 (October, 1945), p.3.

42. Ibid, pp.7-8.

43. Ibid, p.3.



L'écrivain est en situation dans son époque: chaque parole a des retentissements. Chaque silence aussi..., en une circonstance particulière de sa vie, a mesuré sa responsabilité d'écrivain. L'occupation nous a appris la nôtre.[44]

Therefore, the intellectual must be "engagé", committed to defend a certain conception of man. This conception, with which the existentialists necessarily agree, is that: *c'est ce que nous nommons la liberté et la personne n'est rien d'autre que sa liberté.*[45] Perhaps this is the reason why Sartre committed himself to the Algerian War later in the 1950s. First, he condemned France for using the nineteenth-century economic machinery of colonial exploitation as we have seen in the second chapter. Second, he attacked the French Army for using the method of torture, as we are going to see later. Thus, Sartre became "engagé" and committed himself to defend the freedom of the Algerian people. But how and when did Sartre start to condemn France for using torture in Algeria?

In his article, "Vous êtes Formidables" (1957) (You're Terrific), Sartre condemned both sides for using torture. Torture was probably the basest part and most important effect of the Algerian revolution. Since the torture existed on both sides, a number of questions had arisen at this stage:

Sur la solution du problème Algérien, des amis pouvaient différer d'avis sans cesser de s'estimer. Mais les exécutions sommaires? Mai la torture? Peut-on garder de l'amitié pour celui qui les approuverait? Chacun se tait, chacun regarde son voisin qui se tait, chacun se demande: "Que sait-il? Que croit-il? Qu'a-t-il décidé d'oublier? Sauf entre gens "du même bord" on craint de parler. Si j'allais découvrir une complaisance criminelle en l'homme qui vient de me serrer la main: il ne dit rien, cet homme; qui ne dit rien consent.

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44. Ibid, p.5.

45. Ibid, p.17.

Mai je ne dis rien non plus, moi. Si c'était lui, au contraire, qui me reprochait ma veulerie? La méfiance nous enseigne une solitude nouvelle: nous sommes séparés de nos compatriotes par la crainte d'avoir à mépriser ou d'être méprisés. C'est une même chose, d'ailleurs, puisque nous sommes tous pareils et l'on a peur d'interroger les gens parce que leur réponse risque de révéler notre dégradation.[46]

But later, Sartre seemed to condemn only France, because fifteen years ago France was condemning Germans who used different kinds of torture, as he asserted:

Plongés dans la stupeur, les Français découvrent cette évidence terrible: si rien ne protège une nation contre elle-même, ni son passé, ni ses fidélités, ni ses propres lois, s'il suffit de quinze ans pour changer en bourreaux les victimes, c'est que l'occasion décide seule: selon l'occasion, n'importe qui, n'importe quand, deviendra victime ou bourreau.[47]

But in France itself the responsibility toward torture in Algeria was collective. Although Sartre did not see the tortured Algerians, he condemned its use. It appeared in Sartre's earlier writing when he said: "We must militate in our writings in favour of the freedom of the person..."[48]

In February, 1958 there was a huge demand in bookshops in France for a first-hand account of torture in Algeria - La Question by Henri Alleg, member of the Algerian Communist Party, and editor of the newspaper Alger-Républicain, from 1950 to 1955. He was arrested by the French paratroops of General Massu's Tenth Division (Parachutists) in June 1957 and he had been imprisoned for a month in EL-Biar (Algiers). Alleg, a

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46. Sartre "Vous êtes Formidables", Situations, V, p.64.

47. Sartre "Une Victoire", Situations, V, p.73.

48. Sartre, What is Literature? Translated by Bernard Frechtman. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), p.29.

European Jew whose family had settled in Algeria during the Second World War, was put to torture as were other Algerians.

In his introduction to Henri Alleg's account of torture "Une Victoire" (A Victory), Sartre realized that the victim who successfully resisted his tortures, like Alleg must show "will" and "courage" beyond what we can call human. Sartre affirmed that:

Mais, dans la torture, cet étrange match, l'enjeu semble radical: c'est pour le titre d'homme que le tortionnaire se mesure avec le torturé et tout ce passe comme s'ils ne pouvaient appartenir ensemble à l'espèce humaine...Il faut que sa trahison la brise et débarrasse à jamais d'elle. Celui qui cède à la question, on n'a pas seulement voulu le contraindre à parler; on lui a pour toujours imposé un statut: celui de sous-homme.[49]

It should be noted that Sartre had written a play called The Victors (1949), which had no hero, although the theme of the play was heroism. There were five resistance fighters in Sartre's play, who had no power. Things happened to them but they could not make things happen. In The Victors, the intellectual Henri is the most Sartrean character of the play, particularly when Sartre wrote:

You are too concerned with yourself, Henri; you want to redeem your life...Hell, what you need to do is work, and you'll be saving your life into the bargain.[50]

Later Simone de Beauvoir described the circumstances in which Sartre had written The Victors; she explained:

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49. Sartre "Une Victoire", Situations V, p.84.

50. Sartre, The Victors. Translated by Lionel Abel (New York: Knopf, 1949), p.78.

He had thought a great deal about torture for four whole years; alone, and among friends, we asked ourselves: Am I sure I would not talk? How do you manage to hold on? All these thoughts that haunted him he threw into his play.[51]

However, after nine years, Sartre seemed to find himself in the same situation but with a real hero (Henri Alleg) who resisted torture.

At first, Sartre seemed to ignore the tortured Algerians, who had been resisting and suffering since November 1954. Gradually, he became aware of the circumstances of torture in Algeria, when Henri Alleg was tortured. One can say either Sartre did not pay any attention to the tortured Algerians or refused to condemn the French side. From this point of view, it is very difficult to criticize Sartre's attitude towards the torture in Algeria, because he had not seen the victims. But as the intellectual must be "engagé" and accept this social responsibility, Sartre committed himself and he stressed:

Et puis l'on arrête au hasard; tout Musulman est "questionnable" à merci: la plupart des torturés ne disent rien parce qu'ils n'ont rien à dire, à moins qu'ils ne consentent, pour ne plus souffrir, à faire un faux témoignage ou à s'accuser gratuitement d'un crime impuni dont il paraît opportun de les charger. Quand à ceux qui pourraient parler, on sait bien qu'ils se taisent. Tous ou presque tous. Ni Audin\*, ni Alleg, ni Guerroudj\*\* n'ont desserré les dents. Sur ce point, les tortionnaires d'El Biar sont mieux renseignés que nous.[52]

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\* Maurice Audin, Professor in Algiers University, had been tortured before Alleg, as we are going to see later.

\*\* Mrs. Jacqueline Guerraudj, one of the best students of Simone de Beauvoir in Rouen. She had gone as a teacher to Algeria and she got married to a member of the FLN.

51. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p.112.

52. Sartre, "Une Victoire", Situations, V, pp.81-82.

It is with the particular case of Alleg that Sartre became aware of the torture inflicted in Algeria, as he pointed out:

La torture s'est imposée d'elle - même, elle était devenue routine avant même qu'on s'en fût avisé. Mai la haine de l'homme qui s'y manifeste, c'est le racisme qu'elle exprime. Car c'est bien l'homme qu'on veut détruire, avec toutes ses qualités d'homme, le courage, la volonté, l'intelligence, la fidélité - celles même que le colon revendique. Mai si l'Européen s'empporte jusqu'à détester sa propre image, c'est qu'elle est reflétée par un Arabe.[53]

First let us see how Henri Alleg had been tortured. Apparently, Sartre was right when he said that:

Alleg, en quelques traits, nous décrit ceux qu'il a connus et cela suffit à marquer les étapes de la métamorphose...Tout cela, c'est la calme lucidité d'Alleg qui permet de le comprendre. Quand il n'apporterait rien d'autre, il faudrait lui garder une reconnaissance profonde. Mai il a fait bien plus: en intimidant ses bourreaux, il a fait triompher l'humanisme des victimes et des colonisés contre les violences déréglées de certains militaires, contre le racisme des colons (pied-noir).[54]

Indeed, it was Alleg, the first tortured Frenchman who discovered and described the method of torture in Algeria in order to show to public opinion how people were regularly and systematically tortured.

In The Question, Alleg explained how he had been tortured by the French paratroopers in Algiers. He realized that the French soldiers were

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53. Ibid, p.86.

54. Ibid, pp.78-87.

proud of torturing people and characterized themselves as Gestapo, as they claimed:

"Well, A Frenchman! He's sided with the rats against us?..."  
"Lie down!..."  
"We fought the war in Indo-china that was enough to know your type. This is the Gestapo here! You know the Gestapo? Then, with irony: "So you wrote articles about torture did you bastard! Very well! Now it's the Tenth Paratroop Division who are doing it to you".[55]

Alleg perhaps thought that it was only the behaviour of the army toward the prisoners, but soon he experienced his first subjection to the field "gegene" which many Algerians came to know, when they were interrogated, and he said:

A flash of lightning exploded next to my ear and I felt my heart racing in my breast. I struggled, screaming, and stiffened myself until the straps cut into my flesh.[56]

Here, I believe, their own object was not only to torture a man for a while with pain but to drive him mad. In the second step for Alleg, a large magneto was used:

Instead of the sharp and rapid spasms that seemed to tear my body in two, it was now a greater pain that took possession of all my muscles and tightened them in longer spasms.[57]

Electric torture was eventually regarded as a matter of course, the electrodes were placed in Alleg's mouth; he said that:

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55. Henri Alleg, The Question, pp.41-7.  
56. Ibid, p.44.  
57. Ibid, p.48.

My jaws were soldered to the electrode by the current, and it was impossible for me to unlock my teeth, no matter what effort I made. My eyes, under their spasmed lids, were crossed with images of fire, and geometric luminous patterns flashed in front of them.[58]

At the end of this horrible scene, which one would not advise weak stomachs to hear about, Alleg was left in the room with an intolerable thirst. The torturers seemed to "look after" him as they had promised; torture by electricity, by drowning, by fire, by thirst, with all the perfected techniques of our times.

As the torturers described themselves as supermen, Gestapo, strong and severe, they wanted to convince themselves and their victims of their invincible power. Certainly, the most important thing was to make the prisoner feel that he did not belong to the same world. But in reality as Sartre put it:

L'essentiel est de faire sentir au prisonnier qu'il n'est pas de leur race: on le déshabille, on le ligote, on le moque; des soldats vont et viennent, proférant des insultes et des menaces avec une monchalance qui se veut terrible.[59]

However, the torturers were using different kinds of water torture, they repeatedly put their victims' heads into water until the victim was half drowned, then they would take the victim out, not with their hands as one might expect, but with a rope attached to his body. The torturers were not satisfied with torturing Alleg, they put him into water like other Algerians. He reported that:

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58. Ibid, pp.56-7.

59. Sartre, "Une Victoire", Situations, V, p.77.

I had the impression of drowning, and a terrible agony, that of death itself, took possession of me..."That's it! He's going to talk", said a voice.[60]

Further, he stated that:

I don't believe that there was a single prisoner who did not, like myself, cry from hatred and humiliation on hearing the screams of the tortured for the first time.[61]

However, at the EL-Biar centre in Algiers, Alleg, certainly, heard different yells of tortured people and their hoarse laments which seemed to him like those of animals being slowly put to death. Suddenly, all these people disappeared. Among these horrible cries, was the horror of an old Algerian Moslem who wanted to escape torture and to release his life from torturers, as Alleg reported:

Between the terrible cries which the torture forced out of him, he said, exhausted: "Vive la France! Vive la France!" Without doubt, he was hoping in this way to appease his tormentors. But the others continued to torture him and their laughter rang through the whole building. [62]

Also, one of the tortured Algerians said later:

Ou je suis torturé:  
On passe à la torture comme les voitures passent dans une chaîne de montage. Mai là, c'est pour le démontage! La Casse! L'anéantissement physique et moral. Sous la torture et devant l'impossibilité d'obtenir la mort, certains pères finissent par accuser leurs enfants; certains enfants leur père ou leur mère ou leur frères et soeurs. Comment la "mère des Arts, des armes et des lois" en est-elle arrivée là?[63]

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60. Henri Alleg, The Question, p.49.

61. Ibid, p.68.

62. Ibid, p.91.

63. Belkacem Ouled Moussa, Les Chemins de L'indépendance, (Paris: Sindbad, 1980), p.262.



However, as one can imagine, Alleg was not the first Frenchman to be tortured in the Algerian revolution. There were many people who disappeared without any information given from the official sources like Gabrielle Griminez, Blanche Moire, Elytte Loup, and other young women, and all these people sided with Algerian nationalism.

Probably, the first tortured Frenchman was Maurice Audin. Twenty-five year old Audin, brilliant mathematician in the Science Faculty of Algiers University, was a member of the Algerian Communist Party. Arrested a few days before Alleg by the French parachutists on suspicion of aiding the FLN in June 1957, Audin was tortured by electricity, by drowning, by fire, by thirst, etc...According to General Salan, Audin had escaped and made his way to Tunisia. As there was misleading information about Professor Audin, I believe that the Gestapo of the fifties tortured him to death. In his book Torture, Cancer of Democracy, France and Algeria: 1954-1962, (1963), Vidal-Naquet said that: "It was at Fort Emperor that Maurice Audin was secretly buried after he had been murdered..."[64]

For months, members of the National Assembly had been inquiring about Audin's fate. French intellectual leaders, including one hundred professors, had set up the "Maurice Audin Committee" to find out what had happened to Audin.[65] Alleg asserted that Audin had been too badly hurt to have escaped his captors, he was murdered. By bringing to light these two incidents, Alleg's The Question again rallied world opinion against France, as there was wide discussion of French Army atrocities and of how France was waging her "war" in Algeria.

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64. Vidal-Naquet, P. Torture: Cancer of Democracy, France and Algeria: 1954-1962, Translated by Barry Richard, (London: Penguin Books, 1963), p.53.

65. Le Monde, January 25, 1958, p.5.

Up to this point, it seemed that Sartre himself was concerned about the torturer and the victim, as he stated:

Aujourd'hui, nous savons qu'il n'y a rien à comprendre: tout s'est fait insensiblement par d'imperceptibles abandons, et puis, quand nous avons levé la tête, nous avons vu dans la glace un visage étranger, haïssable: le nôtre.[66]

Earlier, in his preface to Aden-Arabie, concerning the post war period, Sartre wrote: "Nous autres, les vieux, nous y laissâmes quelques plumes et toutes nos vertus".[67] Moreover, he said later, on Fanon and the Algerians "it is to his own brothers that he proclaims our old tricks, for he is sure that we have no spare ones".[68] Here, someone could say that Alleg was the victim of torture and Fanon was the colonial victim, but how about Sartre? Is he the victim and the executioner of the work he offered to us? Perhaps it is too early to judge him now, as this aspect will be developed later in the chapter.

Now let us examine the tortured Algerians and how the French Army institutionalized torture and constituted in each single area an institution of torture with all the perfected equipment and technique.

Indeed, before Alleg and Audin were tortured in June 1957, there were many Algerians who had been tortured by different methods since the outbreak of the revolution. People of different ages, including young girls, were tortured throughout the country mainly in big cities like Algiers, Constantine, Annaba, Oran, Tizi-Ouzou (Kabylia), and Khenchela (Aurès). The main goal of the French Army in torturing innocent people in Algeria

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66. Sartre, "Une Victoire", Situations, V, p.73.

67. Sartre, preface to Paul Nizan's Aden-Arabie p.12.

68. Sartre's preface to Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, Translated by Constance Farrington, (London: Penguin Books, 1961), p.19.

was to put down the number of the ALN and to destroy the FLN's aims. The most preferred method of torture which was used by both the police and the army was the "gegene". This technique consisted of an army signate magnito from which electrodes were fastened to different parts of the human body, particularly to the sexual organs (penis and breast). They were moved about the entire body, left for a long time on the chest, where the thoracic cage protects the heart, so the tortured went mad, jumping here and there, like a scalded cat. As the torturers were not satisfied, they also used other methods, as the eye witness reported:

These experts made the recalcitrant open their mouths by pinching their noses. They thrust the antennae deep down into their throats. But it sometimes happened that, in his agony, the prisoner would clamp his jaws together so violently that he sliced through the wires, in one go. So they had to be thickened.[69]

According to Sergeant Leulliette who published his documented collection during the Algerian revolution (1954-1957), as "Documents: Algérie", as the torture had become the official method of investigation, each company had its own little torture chamber and each room was well equipped. He described the torture chamber of number one company of the Second RPC, his own company in Hussein-Dey (Algiers) which seemed to the Algerians a small institution of torture compared with EL-Biar and Bouzareâ. Sergeant Leulliette said that they used to sleep during the day and, almost every night, there were secret expeditions into the endless Casba, or the suburbs of the city. The paratroopers used to go and drag the men from their beds. No public or private building could bar its doors to them and no one was ever safe from their investigation. Further, the evidence of torture gathered in Algeria seemed to be

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69. Pierre Leulliette, St. Michael and the Dragon, p. 233.

consolidated by the eye-witness account of their sergeant, as he reported from his company that nearly all parachutists who were camped in Hussein-Dey adapted the old Gestapo methods to their own uses. Some of them claimed that they were French Alsatians, but for Sergeant Leulliette, were in fact, "genuine SS men", including the captain in charge of the torture chamber. He asserted that:

These special teams worked in relays under the benevolent eye of the Captain, an intellectual, one of those for whom suffering does not exist - especially the suffering of others. They worked in groups of three, smoking cigarettes. Their task consisted mainly of torturing the bound and naked prisoners, one after another, from morning till night, under the guise of interrogation.[70]

It should be noted that Algiers had only one face, that of war. There were an incredible number of French soldiers and policemen occupying it; there may have been more soldiers than civilians (you could not go a hundred yards without meeting one). The other side (the Algérois) seemed as if they did not exist, because they had no hope any more in confronting the huge army with modern technique of weapons. Even if death was ugly, stupid and filthy, for "the Algérois" it was still better than living a life just because there was no alternative. People were tortured indiscriminately without any evidence, as Sergeant Leulliette reported:

That was how, one day, a rather witty Sergeant amused himself by scouring the district in a lorry and collecting all the Arabs (Algerians) he met dressed at all smartly in European clothes, without even asking them for their papers. He came back with a lorry-load. Parading his victims in the glutinously muddy ward, he first had the idea of making them do a few "press-ups" and a few stretches by way of punishment. Then...hunting down the best-dressed Moslems.[71]

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70. Ibid, p.232.

71. Ibid, p.234.

In France itself, it seemed that the issue on which leftist public opinion came to rest was the question of torture. Certainly, the campaign against the methods of pacification in Algeria had been principally the report of leftist intellectuals, Catholic and non-Catholic, and their journals like Témoignage Chrétien, France-Observateur, and L'Express. The campaign subsequently spread to Les Temps Modernes and Esprit. Therefore, the deficiencies of the campaign against the atrocities of the French Army were discovered most clearly in the controversy over torture, as Bourdet, a left-wing journalist and politician, affirmed:

If military slaughterers take more lives and create a greater suffering, they do not dishonour their authors to the same degree, they do not create the same irremediable chasm, they do not engage the same quality of evil freely chosen, calmly accepted, savoured...There are degrees in horror, and the bloody attacks of terrorists, like the bloody violence of repression, are still crimes of men, moved by human passions. Cold-blooded torture of a defenceless prisoner, sadistic torment in order to make him talk, which destroys the body slowly and seeks to empty the soul - this is the bestial crime above all others. Bestial...I insult the beasts.[72]

But Sartre may have been more accurate when he asserted that the French people actually knew the truth although they made an effort to hide it from themselves, but they had chosen to accept their complicity with the torturers. Sartre did not blame the individual soldier for his atrocity. In "Une Victoire" he started to condemn both the French government and the atrocities of the army:

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72. Claud Bourdet, "Tortures en Oranie?", France-Observateur, September 27, 1956, p.4.

En 1943, rue Lauriston, des Français criaient d'angoisse et de douleur; la France entière les entendait. L'issue de la guerre n'était pas certaine et nous ne voulions pas penser à l'avenir; une seule chose nous paraissait en tout cas impossible: qu'on pût faire crier un jour des hommes en notre nom.

Impossible n'est pas français: en 1958, à Alger, on torture régulièrement, systématiquement, tout le monde le sait, de M. Lacoste aux cultivateurs de L'Aveyron, personne n'en parle. Ou presque: des filets de voix s'effilochent dans le silence. La France n'était guère plus muette sous l'Occupation: encore avait-elle l'excuse de porter un bâillon.[73]

Accordingly, Sartre asserted that the aim of the torturers was not just to obtain information, as it appears to us, but to force the victim to "...se désigne elle-même, par ses cris et par sa soumission, comme une bête humaine, (human beast)".[74] Torture therefore became what the anti-colonialist left called a "system", that is, "little by little it became an institution with its organization, its instructors, its workers, one could almost say its laws".[75] However, at the end of his "Une Victoire", Sartre seemed to dismiss the moralists who reacted against the act without examining how its logic was marked in the nature of the situation, as he stressed in concluding his preface to *Alleg*:

A quoi bon, d'ailleurs, troubler la conscience des bourreaux?  
Si quelqu'un d'eux bronchait ses chefs le remplaceraient: un de perdu, dix de trouvés...non, il ne suffit pas de punir ou

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73. Sartre, "Une Victoire", *Situations*, V, p.72.

74. Ibid, p. 84.

75. Comité Maurice Audin, *Sans Commentaire* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1960), p.105.

de rééduquer quelques individus; non, on n'humanisera pas le guerre d'Algérie. La torture s'y est établie d'elle-même: elle était proposée par les circonstances et requise par les haines racistes; d'une certaine manière, nous l'avons vu, elle est au coeur du conflit et c'est elle, peut-être, qui en exprime la vérité la plus profonde. Si nous voulons mettre un terme à ces immondes et mornes cruautés, sauver la France de la honte et les Algériens de l'enfer, nous n'avons qu'un moyen, toujours le même, le seul que nous ayons jamais eu, le seul que nous aurons jamais: ouvrir les négociations, faire la paix.[76]

It should be noted that the years 1956-1957 were a period of important transfers of power from Paris to the military authorities in Algeria in order to consolidate their position and to maintain "L'Algérie Française", not by political protection or by defence and exploitation of the main production of the country, as the West used to do to the colonized, but by bombing villages and killing people, as we have seen in the previous section, particularly when the FLN carried out actions against their forces. Certainly the atrocities of the French Army had to avenge and to slaughter innocent people, as Sergeant Leulliette reported.

An "Adjutant" (French Officer) made his way on his own...He was killed by Arabs (Algerians) with knives in the street...Getting killed in the battle was all right...Vengeance! Vengeance!...Sixty-Four people (innocent)...were slaughtered by automatic rifle or bayonet in less than an hour. Fire did the rest.[77]

Moreover, torture was one of these new privileges, the transfers of military power in Algeria. It appeared that Simone de Beauvoir was right when she said that:

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76. Sartre, "Une Victoire", Situations, V, p.88.

77. Pierre Leulliette, St. Michael and the Dragon, pp.160-1.

"And then of course there's the usual torture ration". It was monotonous, certainly: electric goads, immersions, hangings, rapes, funnels, stakes, nails torn out, bones broken; always the same programme. But we saw no reason to change our tune until the army and the police changed theirs.[78]

But General Massu, "a pious and scrupulous man", had insisted on sampling the electrodes himself and his verdict was: "Very rough, but a brave man could take it".[79] It means that the French government was aware of the matter and approved the system of torture. They claimed that there was no link between the army and the politicians. But later, at the trial of one officer in "L'Organisation de L'Armée Secrète" (OAS)\* (I shall discuss this organization in the last chapter), Godard, a defence witness asserted that:

I declare under oath that Godard, like a hundred other officers, received an order to torture in order to obtain information. I do not know who the highest placed authority to give the order was. You will never find a written trace of it.[80]

Certainly, the army was not satisfied with this arrangement, as it appeared that it might tend to create insubordination within the ranks. Probably, several reports by lower-rank soldiers to their officers were ignored.

It should be noted that when public opinion became aware of the torture in Algeria and blamed the French Army for their action toward torture, the military turned against the politicians, the politicians seemed to let the army take the blame. In his book Lieutenant in Algeria, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, founder and editor of L'Express, who spent six months as an officer in Algeria, reported one officer's reaction to this:

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- \* OAS: L'Organisation de L'Armée Secrète. A clandestine force organized in 1961 by die-hard French Generals, residents of Algeria - pied-noir, who sought to prevent Algerian independence.
78. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, pp.391-2.
79. Ibid, p.396.
80. Cited in J.M. Théolleyre, Ces procès qui ebranlèrent La France, (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1966), p.338.



In this region we are rather well informed...If I do not stop (the FLN agents) they continue their work...which is very effective...If I stop them? Since there is no precise crime...One day or another they are released. They come back here with a reputation ten times greater...If I stop them and kill (supprimer) them? That is the only reasonable operation. Only...I won't do that without an order. At Algiers they tell me that they do not want to know and that they will close their eyes...Great! the soldiers get to do the dirty work...and then...they turn against the army...These gentlemen will have their hands clean...No, I will not do it...This makes ten times that I have asked the administration for instructions: no answer...They don't want to know.[81]

Earlier, in February 1955, Robert Guillaume, Inspector General of the Administration, had been given the task of instituting an inquiry on torture in Algeria, and the report was not published until March. The report was intended as a single, isolated study to supply information on only three points:

1. les sévices. (the forms of violence used).
2. les responsabilités (the authority under which maltreatment occurred).
3. l'utilité, dans certaines conditions, des sévices (the efficacy, in certain conditions of the maltreatment).[82]

Guillaume's inquiry was a much more serious affair when he submitted his report to Jacques Soustelle. Although Guillaume had restricted his inquiry only to the Kabylia and to the area of Constantine, he rightly considered that he had sufficient information and he seemed to the French authorities to have worked scientifically and objectively.

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81. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, Lieutenant in Algeria, p. 54.

82. Vidal-Naquet, La Raison d'État, (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1962), p.60.

Wuillaume had interrogated police officers and no more than sixty-one prisoners who had been carefully chosen from the prisoners. His conclusions were clear; that physical violence of every kind had been inflicted on suspects throughout Algeria. Wuillaume recommended:

...the water and electricity methods, provided they are carefully used, produce a shock which is more psychological than physical and do not therefore constitute excessive cruelty...This conclusion, which takes us back to a recent and painful past (a reference to the Gestapo) may appear repugnant. But since the problem is with us, we must face it.[83]

As it seemed to Wuillaume, "interrogation by water" was the torture of the Middle Ages. It was necessary to make use of electricity as a modern method (Wuillaume's report had given birth to a doctrine of torture). He concluded his researches:

...Now either of these attitudes is admissible, the first because the veil has been lifted and public opinion alerted, the second because Algeria, particularly in the present circumstances, has need of an especially effective police force. To restore its confidence to the police force and set it back on its feet there is only one remedy: to recognize and condone certain procedures.[84]

The role of the director of police Jean-Mairey was the highest ranking officer of the French police, with authority over nearly all of France's police services. This senior civil servant with an honourable history in the French resistance of the Second World War, he found it: "...intolerable to think that French police officers could by their behaviour evoke the methods of the Gestapo".[85]

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83. Quoted in Vidal-Naquet, P. Torture: Cancer of Democracy, p.35.

84. Quoted in Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p.340.

85. Vidal-Naquet, P. La Raison d'État, p.89.

Although Wuillaume did not mention any medical supply for prisoners in his report, Soustelle "categorically refused" to accept Wuillaume's conclusions: "The attempt to establish the limits of personal responsibility is one of the extremest difficulty. Furthermore, it is to my mind inopportune".[86]

It should be noted that during the "Battle of Algiers" the interrogation techniques of French intelligence were vicious. For instance, the co-operation between the army and the police was totally successful, as General Massu's system of "quadrillage" and the rifling of the police was increased by the work of the new organization called the "Dispositif de Protection Urbaine" (DPU). This new organization had been created by order of Resident Minister Robert Lacoste, and placed under the control of Colonel Roger Trinquier who had been in Indo-China as an expert on subversive warfare. The DPU divided Algiers into sectors, sub-sectors, blocks, buildings and houses.

According to General Massu, when the DPU handed over the suspects from the city, mainly from the Casba area, they would interrogate first in what he called the "Détachement Opérationnel de Protection" (DOP) which he described as being "specialists in the interrogation of suspects who wanted to say nothing". Then, the suspects would be passed on to a "centre d'hébergement" for torture. Most of these people disappeared under the torture of the French paratroops. Thus, all those who died under torture were thrown everywhere. Among these people who were tortured to death was Larbi Ben-M'hidi, the FLN political leader in Algiers, who had been tortured until he died. But General Massu claimed that Ben-M'hidi hanged himself with an electric flex, while Colonel Yves Godard, Chief-of-Staff to the Tenth Parachutist Division in Algiers, later

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86. Ibid, p.341.

said in his memoirs that Massu made no comment when they had discussed the death of Ben'M'hidi together. However, the exact truth about Ben-M'hidi's death remains a mystery to European historians to this day. But to the Algerians Ben'M'hidi had been tortured until he disappeared, like many other Algerians. Yves Courrière, generally well-informed on French undercover activities, wrote of bodies dropped out in the sea by helicopter, which might prove that Ben-M'hidi's body dropped out with other Algerians.[87] Further, there were a great number of mass graves in the Algiers area and Mitidja region, as Sergeant Leulliette reported:

He [body] was buried, or, rather, hidden discreetely in the ground. His body was laid next to his comrade's in the bottom of the big ditch.[88]

Sergeant Leulliette asked himself that: "Was I wrong not to show any sympathy for these new methods?"[89]

Seemingly, the torture which had been inflicted in Algiers since the outbreak of the Algerian revolution, helped the French military forces to win the "Battle of Algiers". Certainly without the use of torture, the FLN's network would never have been overcome and the "Battle of Algiers" could not have been won by General Massu. Later in his book La Vraie Bataille d'Alger, Massu acknowledged the use of torture but disavowed its routinization. He said that in the face of the necessity to obtain from terrorists: "urgent operational information on which the lives of innocent beings depended,...it was a consequent necessity to knock them about a bit...to make them 'spit it out'".[90] However, Algiers between 1957 and 1960 seemed to the FLN's leaders in Tunis as the Capitulation of Dien-Bien-Phu.

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87. Yves Courrière, La Guerre d'Algérie: Le Temps des Léopards, Vol.III, p.525.

88. Pierre Leulliette, St. Michael and the Dragon, p.243.

89. Ibid, p.24.

90. Jacques Massu, La Vraie Bataille d'Alger, (Paris: Plon, 1972) p.165.

But the torture was not only in Algiers, as one might expect it was practised all over Algeria by the French Army in order to obtain information and to destroy the FLN's underground. The prisons were full throughout the country as the French government built more detention camps than schools or hospitals. The Algerian people were suffering torture and they had to resist in order to have their own freedom. They had learned by experience that they had one enemy and they had to organize themselves and to fight with confidence. As Sartre put it:

**En Algérie, notre armée s'est déployée sur tout le territoire: nous avons le nombre, l'argent, les armes; les insurgés n'ont rien, sauf la confiance et le soutien d'une grande partie de la population.[91]**

Thus, the French Army learned from the "Battle of Algiers" that torture was the most important means of putting down the number of the ALN. In Palistro (Kabylia) for instance an eye witness reported:

**They were bodies: the bodies of hanged men...I saw that they were all, apparently, still alive. Yes, everyone of them. But for how much longer?...they had been strung up by their feet and their heads had slowly filled with blood...A night and a day spent in that position...most of them died that night. Many "talked" to avoid the horror of that slow death.[92]**

I have mentioned earlier that there was no distinction between men and women in torture. The French military forces destroyed everything in Algeria, even the hope and the future of the younger girls by raping and

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91. Sartre, "Une Victoire", Situations, V, p.82.

92. Pierre Leulliette, St Michael and the Dragon, p.263.

torturing them. Among these girls Djamila Boupacha, twenty-three years old, an FLN liaison agent, illegally imprisoned by French paratroops, who subjected her to torture and deflowered her with a bottle. Let me explain. When Djamila was arrested by the French paratroops, she was tortured like other young girls (Hassiba Ben-Bouâlli, Djamila Bouhired, Zohra Drif, etc..., who were tortured before her). The torturers put Djamila through the third degree, they affixed electrodes to her nipples with scotch tape, then applying them to her hands, legs, face, anus and vagina and this electrical procedure used for Djamila was interspersed with blows and cigarette-burns. The next step for her, she was hung over a bath on a pole and immersed many times. A week later the French soldiers interrogating her said, "you won't be raped, you might enjoy it". In their book, Djamila Boupacha, Simone de Beauvoir and Gisèle Halimi reported that:

Djamila Boupacha herself states what in fact took place: "I was given the most appalling torture of all, the so-called "bottle treatment". First they tied me up in a special posture, and then they rammed the neck of a bottle into my belly. I screamed and fainted. I was unconscious, to the best of my knowledge for two days". A witness whose name and whereabouts are known actually saw her at Hussein-Dey, bleeding and unconscious, being dragged along by her gaolers. (She was a virgin).[93]

Djamila spent thirty three days in one of those torture centres known as "centre de tri" (classification centre), before they charged her. Throughout the whole of this period there was nothing to rely on, no control to check, no higher authority to protect her from torturers from using her as a mistress. At the end what Djamila had to say to her lawyer was: "I am only one among thousands of other detainees". According to Simone de Beauvoir and Gisèle Halimi, probably Djamila was right in her statement

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93. Simone de Beauvoir and Gisèle Halimi, Djamila Boupacha. Translated by Peter Green. (London: André Deutsch, 1962). p.195.

because there was approximately in 1959, fourteen thousand Algerians confined in French camps and prisons, seventeen thousand in jail in Algeria itself, and hundreds of thousands filling the Algerian camps.[94]

In 1958 General De Gaulle claimed that the use of torture was an integral element of the old "system" and would be abolished with the fall of the Fourth Republic. Certainly, the Fifth Republic proclaimed later that torture had been abolished. But torture was still regularly and systematically practised in prisons, barracks, and the so-called "transit camps" under De Gaulle's Minister of War. According to the army and the politicians, there was a difference between them in their public attitudes towards the use of torture. On the contrary I believe that there was a total agreement.

It should be noted that the torture of the Algerians was not only inflicted in Algeria as might be expected but also in France itself. The Algerian authors of The Gangrene (Abdel-Kader Belhadj, Bechir Boumaza, Moussa Khebaili and Ben-Aissa Souami), were arrested in Paris and tortured by the French "Département de Sécurité du Territoire" (DST),[95] that was before the book had been published by the "Editions de Minuit" and suppressed. This book produced the statements of five Algerian students who asserted that they had been abominably tortured in Paris between the 2nd and 12th December 1958. They had been tortured by different methods of torture. At the end one of them said:

My torture is nothing beside that of my brothers and sisters in Algeria who have been burned alive, mutilated, humiliated, raped, impaled and cut in pieces. But my brothers' voices

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94. "1,000,000 d'Algériens parqués dans les camps de regroupement" El-Moudjahid, No. 40, April 24, 1959 and also see "Les Camps de regroupement", El-Moudjahid, No. 41, May 10, 1959.

95. It should be noted that this organization (DST) used electrical torture in certain instances in 1949. (See Vidal-Naquet, P. Torture: Cancer of Democracy, p.121).

no longer reach France, and the only reason I bear witness is that I hope my voice, which is doubtless weaker, but which is nearer, will perhaps have more chance of reaching it.[96]

Another one affirmed that:

In the midst of the worst tortures I thought hard of my brothers and sisters, of Ben'M'hidi, of Djamila, and I repeated ceaselessly to myself that one can be covered with filth and yet remain clean.[97]

And when one of them attempted to explain to the police officer how he had been tortured, the officer ignored him and he said: "We know this music, you're all the same".[98] As the torture had been increased in France, three French officers who had admitted torturing a young Algerian to death had just been acquitted by the Paris military tribunal.[99] But what was the development of Sartre's political writings toward the tortured Algerians?

Before discussing the development of Sartre's political attitude towards the tortured Algerians, it will be useful to give a bird's-eye view of justice in both France and Algeria towards torture. First, there were special tribunals for particular cases in both countries. But the decree of 7th October, 1958 gave full support and responsibility to military tribunals for dealing with members of the FLN and the French who supported them. In Algeria, the French Army were not satisfied with this system of justice and they had created a "superior military tribunal" and a "special military tribunal". In reality there was no justice in Algeria either under

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96. Abdel-Kader Belhadj, Bechir Boumaza and others. The Gangrene. Translated by Robert Silvers (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1960), p. 54.

97. Ibid, p. 63.

98. Ibid, p. 80.

99. Ibid, p. 80.



Premier Guy Mollet or under General De Gaulle, as torture was never mentioned in the courts when the torturers were in the dock. But later in France when it was decided with the agreement of the Minister of the Interior to open an inquiry into the cases of sixty Algerians who had been found drowned or dead in the Paris area, the official inquiries about these victims were withdrawn from the local courts "for reasons of public security".[100]

It should be pointed out that during the Algerian War the cases of a few tortured people were brought to justice, but nothing was done to stop such crimes against humanity, either in Algeria or in France. As the Western world is still bringing to justice Germans who committed crimes against humanity during the Second World War, supported by the "Geneva Convention", the Algerian government must also open an official inquiry on torture during the Algerian War, 1954-1962. In this case it would be better to make reference to the torturers who brought Klaus Barbie, a former torturer in the Second World War to trial (the longer you live, the more you see).

The French barrister, Maître Jacques Vergès, the defence lawyer of Klaus Barbie, is a radical left-winger, and passionate anti-colonialist. Barbie aged 73, a former wartime Gestapo chief of Lyon in France, was brought to trial in June 1987, for the crimes he committed against humanity. Maître Vergès based his defence on the atrocities of the French Army in the Algerian War. He attempted to put France herself on trial over wartime collaboration with the Germans and alleged French atrocities in Algeria.[101] It seems that Claude Bourdet was right when he asserted in 1955:

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100. Ibid, p. 127.

101. The Times, 15 June, 1987, p.9.

...but it is M.M. Mendès France and Mitterrand who are responsible before public opinion and before history.[102]

Anyway, the evidence which was given to the court of Lyon revealed not only Germany's conduct in France but also French conduct in Algeria. The defence lawyer of Barbie argued that what the French did in their Algerian colonial war in the way of torture, deportation, and killing was similar to Germans in France. He proved these "crimes against humanity" with several witnesses: Algerians, Algerian refugees in Tunisia, and a former French soldier who gave evidence about torture he witnessed during the Algerian War in order to consolidate his position. However, it seems that the whole trial was a "hypocritical charade".[103]

As French justice denounces "crimes against humanity", it will be worthwhile to refer to Jean-Marie le Pen, leader of the French National Front and member of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, when he accused French statesmen of not only torturing people during the Algerian War but also of exposing them to nuclear weapons in the Sahara and the Pacific. Indeed, for these crimes which France committed against humanity in the past, who is responsible today? The French government! French justice! I am not going to discuss this point in detail, but I would like to suggest that the Algerian government reopens an inquiry on the French who tortured Algerians and puts them on trial, as they did Klaus Barbie. Generals and officers who were involved in torture must be

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102. Claude Bourdet, "Votre Gestapo Algérien", France-Observateur, January 1955, p.21.

103. The Times, 17 June 1987, p.8.

brought to justice.\*

Now let us examine how Sartre's political attitude had developed towards the tortured Algerians. Indeed, Sartre was totally concerned about the Algerians; he testified in favour of Ben-Saddok, who had shot Ali Chehkal, a "collaborationist" Algerian moslem political figure and the former Vice-President of the Algerian Assembly and one of the supporters of "L'Algérie Française". At an exit of the Colombes Stadium in Paris, he had been shot by pro-FLN Ben-Saddok. Immediately the FLN took responsibility and asserted that:

"We're the ones they're putting on trial. They're saying that whatever happens to us in Algeria is just a fair exchange!"[104]

The argument for the defence was that Saddok's action was caused by the conditions of life imposed on his Algerian friends. According to Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre was agitated when he had heard different views about Ben-Saddok's action as a murderer. He thought that Ben-Saddok's act was not a terrorist murder but a political one.[105]

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\* It should be noted that Western countries attempted many times to accuse Dr. Kurt Waldheim, President of Austria, of committing "crimes against humanity" during the Second World War, particularly against the Jewish people. However, today tortured Jews have become torturers in Palestine. They are killing people indiscriminately, torturing and deporting the native population in exactly the same way as they were themselves treated during the Second World War. But the Western world which was on the side of the Jewish people during the War, keeps quiet about the "crimes against humanity" which were being committed today by Israel. Indeed, history repeats itself.

104. Quoted in Simone de Beauvoir's Force of Circumstance, p. 393.

105. Ibid, p. 394.

Speaking of the dead man in court, Sartre referred to him as Ali "Jackal". Simone de Beauvoir reported that Sartre:

...went on to emphasize the fact that Saddok's action was a political murder and must not be treated as a terrorist attack.[106]

In the event, it was with relief that Sartre learned of the verdict; life imprisonment, not the death penalty for Saddok:

We were happy for Saddok first of all, but it was also a comfort to find that there were still men in France capable of judging an Algerian according to their conscience.[107]

But the next day every newspaper was violently against Ben-Saddok. "What a nice-looking boy he is, Chehkal's murderer! read one of the headlines." [108] While the FLN's newspaper El-Moudjahid wrote: "Le procès de Ben-Saddok: un Monde qui s'écroule". [109] It should be noted that later the FLN member in France Ali Haroun wrote about this event in his book La 7<sup>e</sup> Wilaya: La Guerre du FLN en France 1954-1962:

Le FLN ne l'a jamais entrepris. Il eût été, en effet, bien moins dangereux pour les militants de commettre, dans l'anonymat de la foule, un tel forfait, que de s'introduire à decouvert dans les tribunes d'honneur du Stade de Colombes particulièrement surveillées pour la protection du Président de la République et de tirer précisément sur Chehkal à ses côtés.[110]

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106. Ibid, p. 394.

107. Ibid, p. 395.

108. Ibid, p. 395.

109. El-Moudjahid, No 14, December 15, 1957. See also, "La justice Française plus raciste que j'ai jamais", El-Moudjahid, No 56, November 26, 1959.

110. Ali Haroun, La 7<sup>e</sup> Wilaya: La Guerre du FLN en France 1954-1962, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1986), p. 108.

Sartre's attitude as a witness for political murder could be considered a positive one towards the struggle of the Algerian people for their liberation and independence. Further, he became more aware of the suppressed Algerians under the French authorities, and he gave a press conference about the violation of human rights in Algeria. And later he affirmed in his interview with Playboy:

**You can take action against what people have made of you and transform yourself. The Algerian child, though predestined to torture or to death, is living out his revolt today; it's he who makes that revolution.[111]**

Toward the end of 1959, the mounting evidence about the existence of prison camps in Algeria became inescapable for the Algerian people. The number of the ALN and the refugees had increased behind the barbed wire "Morice Line" in redistribution centres in Tunisia, where they lived in appalling conditions. According to one report published and addressed directly to the French government, there were at least a million of such people:

**On an average, 550 out of every thousand inmates were children, and one of those 550 was dying every two days; since many of the women and old men were also unable to withstand the conditions, it may be estimated that these camps killed more than a million people in three years.[112]**

Here, Sartre decided that he could no longer stand on the sidelines and responded with alacrity to Francis Jeanson's request for help in his clandestine network that supported the FLN. Sartre granted Jeanson an

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111. Jean-Paul Sartre interview with Playboy, May 1965, p.72.

112. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 468-9.

interview that appeared under his own name in order to protect him from any searching.

In 1959, Sartre presented his play, The Condemned of Altona, in Paris. The first performance of this play was designed to call attention to the torture then being perpetrated by the French Army in Algeria. Sartre wrote:

**My subject is a young man returning from Algeria who has seen certain things out there, has perhaps had a share in them, and keeps his mouth shut.[113]**

He went on to identify the purpose of the play:

**The political situation in France makes it imperative to recover such people for society and despite the filthy brutalities they may have perpetrated.[114]**

By "recover" Sartre meant, very precisely, to make active in the struggle against the war. In this play the soldier hero, Frantz has been imprisoned in windowless rooms since the Second World War in the family of a wealthy industrialist in Altona, suburb of Hamburg (Germany). The entire action of the play turns on the experience of Nazism and the war. The whole aristocratic family was imprisoned and paralysed by its contradictions, failures and solitude. At the beginning of Sartre's play the audience was led to the understanding that Frantz had been killed fifteen years before, as a criminal at the Nuremburg trials. Then the secret of the house was discovered, that Frantz was alive. Frantz had tortured on the

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113. Paul Caruso interview: Jean-Paul Sartre, March 4, 1964, Sartre on Theatre. Edited by Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka. Translated by Frank Jellinek. (London: Quartet Books, 1976), pp. 259-60.

114. Ibid, p. 260.

Russian Front; then he decided to assume his own and his country's destiny, and the main concern of the play was to explore the individual as a historical agent. Frantz's guilt revealed how far he had advanced in his understanding of the relationship of individuals to history. Frantz was neither a Nazi nor a mass murderer. He had tortured and murdered. All these were certainly his acts but he showed the whole responsibility with Hitler, the military command structure, or Germany as a nation. Thus, his guilt is translated into a madness as the only alternative to confronting what he himself had done. Commenting on the theme of the play, Sartre said later in an interview with Kenneth Tynan:

I believe that the tribunal of history always judges men according to standards and values which they themselves could never imagine. We can never know what the future will say of us...The point is that we know we shall be judged, and not by the rules we use to judge ourselves. And in that thought there is something horrific.[115]

Frantz's madness began to disintegrate, and when he was asked to define the meaning of crabs, he said that crabs are men, they are real men, good, and handsome (I have heard them saying "What's that, brother?"). After being tortured, Frantz ceased to be human, he was metamorphosed into an animal - in Sartre's imagination a crab and also the horror of watching a human being transformed into a beast.

But when Frantz absorbed Nazism into his character he became an enthusiastic collaborator of Hitler as he claimed:

I was Hitler's wife...I have supreme power. Hitler has changed me, made me implacable and sacred, made me himself. I

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115. "An interview with Jean-Paul Sartre", in Tynan Right and Left, by Kenneth Tynan (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1967), p. 124.

am Hitler, and I shall surpass myself...Germans will crush me to the earth, and my own men will bleed the prisoners to death...I alone will deal with the prisoners. I'll debase them into abject wretches. They'll talk. Power is an abyss, and I see its depths. I shall decide life or death with a penknife and a cigarette lighter.[116]

It should be noted that Frantz was only a symbol to the critics and the audience in Sartre's play. Sartre was talking to them not only about a former SS lieutenant but also about French torture in Algeria[117]. In transforming the Frenchman who had tortured Algerians into a German who had tortured partisans during the Second World War, Frantz evoked both the French soldier returned from Algeria and the French nation characterized by its experience of the occupation and the Algerian War.

It seemed that the experiences of unbearable powerlessness made Frantz become a torturer after the failure of his attempt to resist the Nazis. Since power was on the side of the Nazis, Frantz supported that power in order to make it his own, although he did not believe in Nazi doctrine. But with the Algerian War, the nation's horror of torture turned from "them" (Germans) to "us" (French). Here, Sartre perhaps made a positive attitude towards the freedom of human beings in Algeria when he emphasized that the French in 1959 found themselves in the same situation to the Algerians as that of the Germans to the French in the Second World War:

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116. Sartre, The Condemned of Altona. Translated by Silvia and George Leeson (New York: Knopf, 1961), pp. 163-4.

117. It should be noted that Sartre had insisted on this point. "None of the spectators took literally the Germany that I presented. No one believed that I really wanted to talk about what happened to a German ex-soldier in 1959. Behind that Germany, they all read Algeria - everyone, even the critics". Jean-Paul Sartre, an interview with Bernard Dort, Théâtre Populaire, xxxvi (1959).



Pendant la guerre, quand la radio anglaise ou la presse clandestine nous avaient parlé d'Oradour, nous regardions les soldats allemands qui se promenaient dans les rues d'un air inoffensif et nous nous disions parfois: "Ce sont pourtant des hommes qui nous ressemblent. Comment peuvent-ils faire ce qu'ils font?" Et nous étions fiers de nous parce que nous ne comprenions pas.[118]

The central fact of Sartre's The Condemned of Altona was torture. Frantz existed in this play as the man who had been tortured and the one who had tortured. He was recognized as well as condemned. Therefore, all Frantz's life had been possessed; first by his father, then by Hitler, now by his memories. For Sartre, it was impossible for Frantz to accept himself in this situation. So, Sartre developed his proclamation on "Une Victoire" in which he said: "L'inhumain n'existe nulle part, sauf dans les cauchemars qu'engendre la peur".[119] Later in his play, The Condemned of Altona, he wrote this notion which gave a full life to these nightmares of the inhuman:

One and one makes one - there's our mystery. The beast was hiding, and suddenly we surprised his look deep in the eyes of our neighbours. So we struck. Legitimate self-defence. I surprised the beast, I struck. A man fell, and in his dying eyes I saw the beast still living - myself.[120]

It should be noted that Sartre's attention in his last play was focussed on the enemy - capitalists, collaborators, and European colonialists. The audience in Sartre's play would identify the enemy as itself. Frantz characterized as France. Was it France whose crimes were so great and Sartre must uncover them through the images of Nazi Germany? This was exactly the main point which Sartre was writing about

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118. Sartre, "Une Victoire", Situations, V. pp. 72-3.

119. Ibid, p. 76-77.

120. Sartre, The Condemned of Altona, p. 169.

the war in Algeria from the European view. In identifying Frantz as France, Sartre was affirming that "them" were the enemy. By his adaptation of "Euripides", Sartre made this explicit:

Man of Europe,  
You despise Africa and Asia,  
And you call us barbarians, I believe,  
But when vainglory and greed,  
Throw you and our land,  
You pillage, you torture, you massacre.  
Where are the barbarians then?[121]

In fact, The Condemned of Altona (1959) invariably provokes comparison with Sartre's play Huis Clos (1943). Fifteen years after the latter play, Sartre seems to take us again into the closed world of five characters imprisoned in what they have done, tending to judge and destroy each other. Sartre himself thinks that The Condemned of Altona is a kind of historical variation in which "characters are dominated, gripped by the past throughout just as they are by each other"[122]. Whereas in Huis Clos, Sartre describes these characters (Estelle, Inez, and Garcin) in one room, the triangle of the relationship in this play is set in a circle. Each of the three characters needs the other, because their past completely defines their present and they have no future. In Huis Clos, Sartre affirms the interference of the other people. Even the room was prepared for the characters by others. While in The Condemned of Altona, Sartre portrays five characters (Frantz, Johanna, Leni, Von Gerlach and Werner). These characters exist primarily in relation to Frantz, whose sequestration has sequestered them as well. Here, the past of the characters defines entirely their present and they have no future, as in Huis Clos.

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121. Sartre, The Trojan Women (Euripides, adaptation by Sartre).  
Translated by Ronald Duncan (New York: Knopf, 1967), p. 130.

122. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, Sartre on Theatre, p. 268.

Later, after Algerian independence, in one of his interviews, Sartre explained the meaning of "Hell is other people" as follows:

Other people are hell insofar as you are plunged from birth into a situation to which you are obliged to submit. You are born the son of a rich man, or an Algerian, or a doctor, or an American. Then you have a cut-and-dried future mapped out, a future made for you by others. They haven't created it directly, but they are part of a social order that makes you what you are. If you're a peasant's son, the social order obliges you to move to the city where machines await you, machines that need fellows like you to keep them going. So it's your fate to be a certain type of worker, a country kid who has been driven away from the country by a certain type of capitalist pressure. Now the factory is a function of your being. What exactly is your "being"? It is the job you're doing, a job that masters you completely because it wears you down - along with your pay, which classifies you exactly by your standard of living. All this has been thrust on you by other people. Hell is the proper description for that kind of existence. Or take a child who was born in Algeria in 1930 or 1935. He was doomed to an explosion into death and the tortures that were his destiny. That, too, is hell[123]\*.

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\* See further information about "hell is other people" in author's M.Litt. Thesis, Jean-Paul Sartre's Conception of Bad Faith (University of Glasgow, 1985).

123. Jean-Paul Sartre interview with Playboy, May 1965, p. 72.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SARTRE'S POSITION ON THE ALGERIAN WAR.**

- (a) De Gaulle, the OAS and Self-Determination for the Algerian People.**
- (b) Sartre's Writings on and Political Activities during the Algerian Revolution.**
- (c) An Assessment of Sartre's Writings on the Algerian War.**

Come then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe. Europe now lives at such a mad, reckless pace that she has shaken off all guidance and all reason...

Nationalism, that magnificent song that made the people rise against their oppressors, stops short, falters and dies away on the day that independence is proclaimed. Nationalism is not a political doctrine, nor a program. If you really wish your country to avoid regression, or at best halts and uncertainties, a rapid step must be taken from national consciousness to political and social consciousness.

Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth  
Translated by Constance Farrington,  
(London: Penguin Books, 1961).

## **INTRODUCTION**

The first concern in this chapter is to discuss the conflict of the Algerian War in the period of General De Gaulle's government and to see how the development of Sartre's attitude towards the Algerian revolution in the 1960s is revealed. The present chapter also discusses Sartre's writings and political activities between 1960 and 1962 in broad outline. This chapter constitutes a continuation of the discussion of the political development on the Algerian revolution in Sartre's writings between 1956 and 1962 stated in the previous chapters.

Finally, I shall draw up a list of Sartre's views on the Algerian revolution, which I may call his positive attitude on the Algerians. However, the main questions to be asked are first, how did the French Army become against De Gaulle's proposal of self-determination for the Algerian people? And second, are Sartre's writings and political activities in favour of the Algerian struggle?

### **(a) DE GAULLE, THE OAS AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE ALGERIAN PEOPLE.**

Before discussing De Gaulle, the OAS, and self-determination for the Algerian people it will be useful to give a bird's-eye view of De Gaulle's political life. Charles André Marie Joseph De Gaulle was born on November 22, 1890. He graduated as a second lieutenant from St. Cyr Military Academy in 1912. In the First World War, he was promoted to Captain and wounded twice and also captured by the Germans and released at the end of the war. At the beginning of the Second World

War he was a colonel in command of an armoured division, and he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general after the success in turning back a German tank offensive at Laon in May 1940. After the fall of France, De Gaulle made an historic radio appeal to France on June 18, 1940 in order to continue the fight, thereby launching the Free French movement. In November 1945, De Gaulle was named as head of the French government. He resigned in January 20, 1946. In June, 1958, De Gaulle returned to power and became the last Premier of the Fourth Republic. De Gaulle's return to power and the creation of the Fifth Republic were both precipitated by the four years old Algerian revolution which had caused growing unrest and repeated political crises in France itself. De Gaulle had the full power to choose his cabinet and he kept for himself the Algerian ministry, which Soustelle desired for himself in order to consolidate his slogan of "L'Algérie Française", and did not offer Soustelle a position in the cabinet at first. But later he was named as Minister of Information when the former Minister resigned. Also, De Gaulle chose Max Lejeune (Socialist) as Minister for the Sahara.

In the first week of June 1958, De Gaulle made a quick tour of Algeria and his every word was being scrutinized. When he arrived at Algiers, General Salan told him that:

"Integration is the key to Algeria. It is necessary that you announce it upon your arrival". De Gaulle answered "We shall see if they want it." [1]

It was surprising to see the new Premier who was greeted by a tremendous, enthusiastic crowd in Algiers and declared that "Je vous ai

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1. Claude Paillat, Dossier Secret de L'Algérie, Vol. II (Paris: Le Livre Contemporain, 1962). p. 57

compris - I have understood you." I know what you want. He hailed Algeria's Europeans and the French Army for opening "in Algeria...the road of renewal and brotherhood." He announced that all Frenchmen including 10 million Algerians would, within three months, take part in elections to choose their representatives to the public assembly. De Gaulle urged participation in the proposed voting even by "El-Moudjahidine". "To those" he said, "I De Gaulle open the door to reconciliation". Moreover, he claimed that he would offer to the Algerian people equality and justice and France will consider that there were only Frenchmen of the same sort, with the same rights and the same duties.

It seemed that De Gaulle wanted to compromise between the "pied-noir" minority and the Algerian Moslem majority in his new policy. He also made speeches in Algerian cities like Oran, Constantine, and Annaba, but he never mentioned the word "integration" or "L'Algérie Française". However, another young man who had played an important part in returning De Gaulle to power could not control his emotions, and his words became among the most quoted of the summer in Radio Algiers. Leon Delbecque, speaking on Radio Algiers, June 5, 1958, stated that he and his friends supported De Gaulle, but not at any price: "We have not crossed the Rubicon just to go fishing on the other side."<sup>[2]</sup> Just two days after Delbecque's rash utterance, De Gaulle was speaking in Mostaganem to a crowd of people. He concluded his speech "Long live Mostaganem! Long live L'Algérie Française! Long live France!"<sup>[3]</sup> As might be expected, one can say that whether De Gaulle was trying to placate Delbecque and other supporters of "L'Algérie Française", or the words were just a slip of the tongue was not known, but De Gaulle's

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2. Le Monde, June 7, 1958, p.2.

3. Le Monde, June 10, 1958, p.2.



popularity with the "ultras" shot up immediately. However, De Gaulle's appeal for reconciliation was rejected by the FLN in Cairo. The FLN leaders stated that Algeria's Moslems were not French and would never be French.

It should be noted that after De Gaulle's speech in Algeria the situation was too complicated as there were the "pied-noir" people who wanted to preserve "their" country and their privileges to keep "L'Algérie de Papa" (Algeria of Papa). They were willing to cooperate with the army and with the Gaullists if it served their purposes. The French Army was ashamed of their defeat in Indo-China, embarrassed at Suez, and further frustrated by the lack of the government support for them in Algeria. The French military leaders were eager - even desperate - for victory. They were not really as sympathetic to the "pied-noir" as it appeared, for them it was a matter of pride. Then there were the Gaullists. Both the army officers and the Gaullists believed in what they called "Franco-Moslem Fraternization" and thought that a policy of integration of Algeria into metropolitan France would lead to higher standards of living and a better life for the Algerian Moslems. It should be pointed out that most of the Gaullists were prudent, patient, intelligent strategists, who planned their activities carefully and they were willing to wait for change, although De Gaulle himself was fully aware of the whole operation and publicly kept aloof from it in order that he might have power come to him without seeming to have seized it. But how and why did De Gaulle offer self-determination to the Algerian people?

On October 23, 1958, De Gaulle announced publicly what he called a "cease-fire" in Paris and agreed to meet with the FLN's leaders and negotiate an "end of hostilities" in Algeria. This was the first press conference of De Gaulle since he became Premier. He also declared that

the FLN had "fought courageously", but slowly they were losing ground to superior French forces. He offered ALN troops a "Brave Men's peace" and he promised that they would be treated honourably under truce flags. But the GPRA rejected De Gaulle's negotiation as "a request for unconditional surrender". The FLN's leaders in Cairo made clear their issue that negotiation would have to centre on Algerian independence demands and could be held only on neutral territory.[4]

First, let us start with the condition of vote for the new constitution on September 28, 1958, referendum. Propaganda for the constitution varied according to where it was being used. And a "yes" vote meant different things to different people. For many, a "yes" vote was a vote for De Gaulle; they assumed that he would do whatever was best for the nation. To the members of the Algerian Committee of Public Safety on the other hand, a "yes" vote meant specifically a vote for integration. Soustelle as Minister of Information, who supported "L'Algérie Française" since the outbreak of the Algerian revolution and his supporters deliberately avoided being precise on what a "yes" vote meant. As the Socialist Edward Depreux complained in Le Monde:

One wants in the country and in the party to count the "yes" and "no" votes, but the word "yes" does not have the same meaning in Paris, in Abdjan and in Algiers. How does one say "no" to certain aspects of the constitution if one is for association between the metropole and the overseas territories?...the government should say what it thinks instead of being quiet.[5]

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4. Speeches and Press Conferences, No. 119 (held in Paris on October, 1958), p.4. (Taken from Documents on Algeria)
  5. Le Monde, September 14, 1958, p.2.

Although General De Gaulle had said that he did not want his name used in the campaign for the "yes" vote, Soustelle did not hesitate to use it, because he was aiming to use his slogan "L'Algérie Française" extensively and implied in his speeches if the people of Algeria voted "yes" in the referendum, they would be voting for integration.[6]

On September 28, 1958, the Fifth Republic's constitution was approved in a referendum by a 4-1 margin in France and overwhelmingly in Algeria. Thus, the results of the referendum were more favourable to the constitution than anyone had predicted. The French of the metropole voted 79% "yes" for the new constitution and Premier De Gaulle had won by 17,666,828 to 4,624,478. In Algeria also the constitution was approved by a 3,356,169 to 118,615 vote. This vote was massive and favourable to the new constitution according to the French government, despite the FLN decree of boycotting the referendum.

After the referendum General De Gaulle made his fourth visit to Algeria since he came to power, and he focused his attention on the Algerian people. He spent the next few days there and on October 3, 1958, he delivered a speech in Constantine detailing his hopes and plans for Algeria. At Constantine, De Gaulle spoke to a crowd of nearly forty thousand people about what he called a five-year plan for the creation of a prosperous, peaceful Algeria linked closely with France. He asserted that:

Stop this absurd fighting and you will at once see a new blossoming of hope all over the land of Algeria. You will see the prisons emptying; you will see the opening up of a future big enough for everybody, and for yourselves in

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6. Le Monde, September 20, 1958, p.3.

particular...Only two paths lie open to the human race today, war or brotherhood. In Algeria as everywhere, France, for her part, has chosen brotherhood.[7]

It should be noted that in De Gaulle's assertion there was no mention of the phrase "L'Algérie Française" in the speech and at the end De Gaulle shouted "Long live France and long live Algeria." [8]

Meanwhile, on September 19, 1958 in Cairo FLN's leaders set up an Algerian Provisional Government-in-exile in order to replace the CCE and to represent the FLN in any eventual government included Ferhat Abbas, Vice Premier and Krim Belkacem, Minister of Defence and Deputy Premier, while Ahmed Ben-Bella, still in prison, was designated Deputy Prime Minister. The new government was promptly recognized by Peking and eight Arab states. The announcement of the GPRA symbolized Algeria's final separation from France. It was also the last political institution to grow out of FLN decision-making in wartime. At a press conference in late October De Gaulle mentioned that these leaders had been making peace overtures to him. He argued to stop fighting immediately so that negotiations could begin. In a speech, De Gaulle declared that:

...the political destiny of Algeria is Algeria itself. Opening fire does not give a man the right to determine that destiny. When the democratic way is open, when citizens have an opportunity to express their will, then there is no other way that is acceptable. Now this way is open to Algeria.[9]

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7. Charles De Gaulle, Major Address, Statement and press Conferences, May 19, 1958 - January 31, 1964. (New York, ND), p.21.
  8. Ibid, p.21.
  9. Ibid, p.26.

It should be pointed out that at the press conference in March 1959, when De Gaulle ruled out "slogans" that would somehow quickly solve the problem of Algeria, he was keeping his statement vague, and indicated that in the future there would be a "new Algeria" - one with a unique Algerian personality and that the Algerians themselves would determine the direction that their country would take:

**As this new Algeria takes shape in body and spirit its political destiny will appear in the minds and in the votes of its children. I am sure that this is what the Algerians want... yes, blood and tears will flow; yet Algeria and France are marching toward the future - a future which, I assert, will belong to everyone and in which no door will be closed.[10]**

Although De Gaulle talked of a close relationship between Algeria and France, he also seemed to be saying that Algeria would be a separate country. Certainly, the "pied-noir" and the supporters of "L'Algérie Française" were angered by these words. In May, 1959 during a trip to Algeria De Gaulle angered them further with the warning. He said that:

**There are those who want to return to the "L'Algérie de Papa", but "L'Algérie de Papa" is dead, and those who are not able to understand that will die with it.[11]**

Noting that Algeria would soon be pacified, he spoke of the "total evolution" of Algerian society and the history of the culture of North Africa. But General De Gaulle still advocated and predicted a French military victory in Algeria.

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10. Ibid, p.47.

11. Le Monde, May 2, 1959, p.1.

In July 1959 former Premier Guy Mollet, who had increased the number of the French military forces and defended integration in 1956 and 1957, he asserted that he no longer believed in it, as he declared:

**The hour has passed...We are not able to say what will take place in Algeria tomorrow, but we must make clear the criteria that we wish to be respected: total equality of rights, majority rule, respect guaranteed to all minorities, declaration that there exists an Algerian personality, acknowledgement that there are links with France that must not be broken.[12]**

In Algeria itself, the ALN were still fighting under control of the FLN organization for their twin goals: independence and liberation of Algeria. The GPRA-in-exile refused to negotiate with De Gaulle's government until withdrawal of all the French troops from Algeria and recognition of self-determination and independence to the Algerian people. Elsewhere in the world the tide was still moving in the direction of decolonization. In Monrovia in early August 1959 nine independent countries of Africa unanimously adopted a motion that France:

**recognize the rights of the Algerian people to self-determination and to independence, to put an end to the hostilities, withdraw all its troops from Algeria, and enter into negotiations with the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic.[13]**

They also discussed a program of aid for the ALN if France did not recognize the independence of Algeria.

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12. Le Monde, July 12-13, 1959, p.2.

13. Le Monde, August 1959, p.5.

It should be pointed out that since the outbreak of the Algerian revolution in November 1954, the Western countries supported France to keep "L'Algérie Française", although, as early as February 1956, Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts in the USA had demanded the liquidation of both the French and the British colonies in Africa.[14] This was before the independence of Tunisia and Morocco, and also before the British had removed their last troops from Egypt.

However, in July 1957, Kennedy made another move regarding the Algerian people. In a speech to the United States Congress, he condemned French policies in Algeria and demanded that the American government place its influences:

...behind the efforts, either through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or the good offices of the Prime Minister of Tunisia and the Sultan of Morocco, to achieve a solution which will recognize the independent personality of Algeria and establish the basis for a settlement interdependent with France and the neighbouring nations.[15]

Now let us discuss how De Gaulle's proposal for the Algerian people's self-determination and how the army officers turned against him. On September 16, 1959, President De Gaulle offered the Algerian people freedom to choose their political future - including independence from France. He stated that after the pacification, the people of Algeria would be allowed to choose one of three arrangements to determine their future

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14 Le Monde, February 28, 1956, p.3.

15. United States, Congressional Record, Vol. 103, Part 81st Congress, First Session, July 2, 1957. p.10788.

to determine their future political status. General De Gaulle presented three choices as:

1. "La Secession" (Secession) - independence.
  2. "La Francisation Complète" (integration) - total integration of France and Algeria;
- or
3. Le Gouvernement des Algériens par les Algériens, appuyé sur l'aide de la France (Internal Autonomy) - autonomy in union with France.[16]

But how and why did De Gaulle present these alternatives to the Algerian people?

Certainly, there were, however, a number of important reservations and conditions as might be expected. First, the Algerian people would not have an opportunity to make a choice until after the restoration of peace. Second, the French people would have the right to approve or disapprove the Algerian people's choice. Third, it appeared that France intended to retain control of the Sahara. Fourth, De Gaulle implied that secession might mean a partition of Algeria; those "pied-noir" who supported "L'Algérie Française" and wanted to remain French citizens would be grouped in the coastal area, with an independent Algeria confined to the hinterland. But how did the GPRA react to De Gaulle's proposal of self-determination for the people of Algeria?

On September 28, 1959, after reportedly consulting with the Arab countries and receiving the encouragement of the Eastern bloc, the FLN

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16. Algérie Documentation, "Discours du Général De Gaulle" prononcé à la Radiodiffusion - Television Française, le 16 Septembre 1959 (Paris, July 1960), p.1.



leaders accepted the principle of self-determination. But they took issue with four specific points of De Gaulle's proposal. They stated that their government would, first, oppose any plan which would provide for the partition of Algeria in any way. Second, they maintained that France did not have the right of ownership of the Sahara oil. Third, they strongly denied that the French people had the right to approve or disapprove the result of the referendum on Algeria's status. Fourth, from experience, the FLN did not believe that the referendum would be fair if the French administered it.[17]

It should be pointed out that an effort was made by De Gaulle in order to bring the Algerian nationalists to the conference table and to gain more support for his Algerian program in France and in the international world. In November 1959, he declared that all Algerians would be able with respect to the proposed referendum:

to take part not only in the voting, but also in the discussions that will precede it, so as to determine the voting procedures, when the time comes, and the regulations governing the campaign that will precede the vote.[18]

Although General De Gaulle had responded and attempted to eliminate one of the four specific objections of the GPRA to his proposals concerning the resolution of the Algerian problem - the GPRA's concern

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17. Time, September 29, 1959, p.8.

18. Speech and Press Conferences of De Gaulle, No. 142, November 10, 1959, p.3. (Taken from Documents on Algeria III).

that a strongly French administration of the proposed referendum on Algeria's political future would prejudice its outcome - there was no immediate progress in regard to negotiations. But how can General De Gaulle decide to offer self-determination to the Algerian people without asking his army who were fighting for the honour and victory of France since November 1954?

When General De Gaulle changed his Algerian policy, one of his first concerns was to reassure the army. In October 1959, he told the French troops that before self-determination could be carried out, Algeria had to be pacified **"completely and humanely"**.<sup>[19]</sup> Paul Delouvrier, De Gaulle's new Delegate-General (a less imposing title than Governor-General), the government's highest civilian official in Algeria, also attempted to dispel military doubts and he affirmed that: **"The route has been marked clearly"**, he explained **"...the army is here and will remain here. France is here and will remain here."**<sup>[20]</sup> General Massu, hero of the torturers and one of the greatest supporters of "L'Algérie Française", returned from government briefing and said to his soldiers, **"I have come to tell you that pacification continues and will continue with the same means."**<sup>[21]</sup>

It should be noted that when the French Army was fighting to pacify Algeria, De Gaulle was struggling to pacify the army. But it was extremely difficult for President De Gaulle to convince the military forces of the necessity for self-determination. The French Army had been at war for six years and they had lost money, arms, and soldiers in order to

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19. L'Express, January 28, 1960.

20. Le Monde, October 31, 1959, p.3.

21. L'Année Politique, 1959, p.284.

ensure the future of "L'Algérie Française". They considered the September 16th offer as a sign of weakness and a partial surrender. The notion of self-determination generated increasing discontent within the officer corps until General Massu vented his anger at a press interview. On January 18, 1960, the Munich newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung carried an interview that General Massu had granted Hans Ulrich Kempfski, an ex-paratrooper turned journalist. Massu complained that De Gaulle had not given the army a clear view of his aims, and he did not understand the goal of the Moslem people. If the army and the government continue like this, they will think it is a weakness.[22]

In L'Echo d'Alger, Alain de Sérigny, the right-wing journalist and fanatical "pied-noir", wrote that General Massu who represented military honour, an honour which is part of France, was absent with his soldiers from us.[23] On January 24, 1960, a huge demonstration of the "pied-noir" against De Gaulle began in Algiers centre for the first time. As the anti-Gaullists were angered, there was a sharp crack of a shot between the army and the demonstrators, eight "pied-noir" were dead and 24 wounded in one hour. An army officer was seriously hurt and was heard to say:

I die in despair. After two years of fighting the rebels to keep Algeria French I've been brought down by French bullets fired by those yelling "L'Algérie Française".[24]

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22. The interview for the Süddeutsche Zeitung was reprinted in Le Monde, January 23, 1960, p.4.
  23. L'Echo d'Alger, January 23, 1960, p.4.
  24. Alain de Sérigny, Un Procès (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1961), p.193.

The French military forces failed to carry out their orders to suppress what had turned into revolution against De Gaulle's Algerian policies. The President was finally able to begin restoring order with the aid of the French troops brought from the Algerian interior, but he did not make a retreat in his Algerian policies in deference to the "pied-noir". On January 29, 1960, General De Gaulle declared that he would seek the most French solution to the Algerian problem and that the French Army would control the referendum on self-determination.[25] It should be noted that it was definitely a retreat; President De Gaulle had, in his September 16, 1959, "self-determination declaration" on Algeria, stated that he preferred Algerian autonomy in union with France to either secession or, the most French solution, which was integration. Furthermore, De Gaulle had also expressed his resolve to allow the FLN to participate in setting up the referendum on self-determination.

But the Europeans of Algeria were still desperate. Many of the "pied-noir" came from families that had lived in Algeria for generations and their future was ambiguous. In this atmosphere of terror and apprehension many of them were recruited to a new secret terrorist organization named "L'Organisation de L'Armée Secrète" (OAS) (Secret Army Organization) whose leaders vowed to use the methods of the FLN to retaliate against Algerian people and against De Gaulle's pro-Algerian policies, and also French policemen who carried out his orders. For the OAS, if De Gaulle would listen to the FLN terrorists, they reasoned, maybe he would listen to the "pied-noir" terrorists. Army officers, likewise, were incensed with the turn of events. The French Army knew that they could

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25. Speeches and Press Conferences, No. 142, January, 1960 "Address Broadcast on January 29, 1960", p.3. (Taken from Documents on Algeria III).

win the war militarily, but now, it seemed that they would be obliged to lose it.

Before discussing how OAS terrorists became anti-Gaullists and anti-Algerians it will be useful to see how they had first started. When General De Gaulle offered self-determination for the Algerian people, a small group of "pied-noir" based in Madrid had used the name of the OAS\*. During the demonstration in Algiers these groups returned to Algeria in order to steal a huge supply of arms and ammunition from the French arsenals there, and after the military revolt of April 1961, these groups of "pied-noir" acquired a new military leadership. It should be pointed out that when OAS terrorism was beginning to make a name for itself on both sides of the Mediterranean, Sartre wrote:

You can see it's the end; Europe is springing leaks everywhere. What then has happened? It simply is that in the past we made history and now it is being made of us...The old "mother countries" have still to go the whole hog; they still have to engage their entire forces in a battle which is lost before it has begun. At the end of the adventure we again find that colonial brutality which was Bugeaud's\*\* doubtful glory;...The national service units are sent to Algeria, and they remain there seven years with no result...today violence, blocked everywhere, comes back on us through our soldiers, comes inside and takes possession of us.[26]

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\* The OAS was based the successor to a long line of right-wing, neo-fascist "pied-noir" parties. It carried on the work of Joseph Ortiz's Front National Français, it replaced the Front pour L'Algérie Française, and it attracted the members of the league for the self-protection Mitidja farmers.

\*\* Thomas-Robert Bugeaud de la Piconnerie (1784-1849), Duke of Isly, Marshal of France. Famous for military exploits in the conquest of Algeria, he was appointed Governor of Algeria in 1840.

26. Sartre in his preface to Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p.23.

It seemed that Sartre knew that the OAS terror marked the end of a grim epoch in history, the close of a disastrous twenty years in the nation's life. According to Sartre, the violence of the OAS was one more indication of the high cost of resisting decolonization, as we shall see in the next section.

In June 1960, General Raoul Salan had retired from military service, and asserting that he said "No" to "L'Algérie Algérienne" (Algerian Algeria). In his retirement General Salan went into hiding in the area of Mitidja farm countryside south of Algiers where most of the wealthy "pied-noir" extremists lived. From there he was able to gain support and control of the European movements against Algerian independence. Salan thought that he had betrayed the Europeans by helping to bring De Gaulle to power in 1958. The ex-general later explained "I had to return to the people and take the leadership of the OAS".[27] However, before the spring of 1961, the OAS had to be completely rebuilt so that it could absorb the new wealth of talent that was available. In his communications with his followers, he emphasized that:

...to build a French Algeria in a community of ideas and actions with the Moslems without any spirit of racism.[28]

In Algeria, both the army officers and the "pied-noir" became more and more angered by De Gaulle's Algerian policies. On April 22, 1961, a military "coup d'état" was launched in Algeria by four retired French Generals opposed to De Gaulle's self-determination for the Algerian

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27. Le Procès du Général Salan, p.81.

28. Communications from Salan to Goddard, OAS Parle (Documents I).

people. The revolt was led by General Raoul Salan, a former commander in Algeria, General André-Marie Zeller, former inspector of the ground forces in Algeria, General Maurice Challe, former commander of French forces in Algeria, and General Edmond Jouhaud, former French Air Force, in co-operation with several officers. These Generals were acting under the name of the OAS. However, although the insurgents had the support of many officers and the anti-Gaullists, they did not have enough support among the troops in order to assure the operation's success. General De Gaulle was able to crush the revolt against his order by April 25, when the majority of the soldiers responded to his radio appeal and remained loyal to the government. Generals Challe and Zeller gave up after only a few days, whereas Generals Jouhaud and Salan escaped and went underground. A few days later they emerged as leaders of the OAS.

In Algeria, especially in Algiers, Oran and Constantine there were bomb explosions everywhere and anti-government demonstrations by Europeans opposed to French withdrawal from Algeria. Many Europeans and Algerian Moslems were killed by the demonstrators and the French troops. Also, in France, the OAS carried out its action against the supporters of "L'Algérie Algérienne". On both sides of the Mediterranean, the OAS carried out an impressive campaign of terror. The OAS trademark was an easily-handled, malleable, powerful dynamite derivative called plastique. At the end of 1961, "plastique" exploded in the plants of all the pro-Gaullist and Left-wing newspapers. Bombs went off everywhere, from the offices of George Pompidou, Minister of State and close personal associate of President De Gaulle, in the Rothschild Bank, to the central headquarters of the Communist Party in Paris. Many well-known personalities, writers and leaders of the Left-wing were attacked in Algeria and France. Among these writers was Sartre who was threatened by the

OAS, as we shall see in the next section. In Algeria, all Moslem doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers and writers were attacked and were killed by OAS terrorists. Among these personalities were Dr. Cherif Zehar, one of the closest friends of Henri Alleg, and who was tortured in 1957 in front of his wife, and also Mouloud Feraoun, the Algerian poetry writer, who was knifed in the back by the OAS in his house. Even the Moslem postmen in Algiers were killed by OAS terrorists on the same day.

The original OAS headquarters in Madrid complained about the independence of Algeria and accused the Spanish group of "total ignorance of the situation in Algeria". According to ex-General Jouhaud, within Algeria itself there were also difficulties in maintaining discipline and he admitted that the OAS was never the monolithic organization some thought it to be. OAS terrorism "was often the work of small groups of French "pied-noir" not under the control of ex-General Salan or his subordinates".[29] It should be pointed out that there were two main terrorist organizations of the "pied-noir" and the army, which worked under the name of OAS in both Algeria and France.

In this difficult situation, the relatively "moderate" Algerian government of Ferhat Abbas was ousted on August 27, 1961, and replaced by Youcef Ben-Khedda, former Secretary General of Messali's MTLN and Minister of Social Affairs in the first GPRA. The announcement came at the end of three weeks of secret meetings in Tripoli, Libya, of the Second FLN National Congress. In his first public speech at the

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29. Le Procès d'Edmond Jouhaud, p.90. It should be pointed out that Lieutenant Roger Degueudre of the First REP had his own gang of daredevil commandos whom he had recruited from the Foreign Legion. Degueudre was always careful to preserve his own freedom of action while carrying out raids in the name of the OAS terrorists.



conference of non-aligned nations in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September, President Ben-Khedda declared that the ALN would continue the fight for freedom and independence of Algeria. He asserted that he was ready to negotiate with the French government, but the Algerian people and the GPRA would never give up their claim to the Sahara. Many anti-colonialist intellectuals who were actively involved in the Algerian revolution welcomed the nomination of the new President of GPRA, among them, Frantz Fanon. Thus, Fanon speaking through Simone de Beauvoir:

He was satisfied with the decisions taken by the CNRA (Conseil National de la Révolution Algérienne) at Tripoli and by the nomination of Ben-Khedda; he believed victory to be at hand, but at what a price!...[30]

During December 1961 and January 1962 informal discussions between French government and GPRA officials took place in secret in order to avoid OAS terrorism. On February 5, 1962, General De Gaulle declared that his policy of self-determination for the Algerian people would eventually lead to an independent Algerian state. In a radio-television address broadcast both in France and Algeria, President De Gaulle reasserted his determination to settle the Algerian nation and to suppress the OAS terror campaign against his Algerian policies. In Tunis, the spokesmen of the GPRA welcomed De Gaulle on February 5, for his reassertion of Algerian independence in the face of violent rightist opposition. Then, formal discussions were begun and reconvened at Evian-les-Bains, France.

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30. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, pp. 608-9.

On June 7, 1962, the GPRA sent her delegation to the final Evian talks with French government, with Belkacem Krim speaking for the GPRA and De Gaulle's Minister for Algeria, Louis Joxe representing the French government. The seven-and-half-year old Algerian revolution against French colonialism in Algeria was ended earlier after a strong position of negotiation of the GPRA on March 18, 1962 by a truce agreement signed by both representatives, the negotiators in Evian. A series of common agreements provided for a cease-fire and ensuring an Algerian self-determination referendum and full sovereignty for an independent country. On March 19, a cease-fire between French military forces and ALN forces had been imposed effectively on all fronts. Moreover, a cease-fire commission was organized to handle any infringements of the agreement and all prisoners taken during combat were to be returned within 20 days.[31] However, immediately, the OAS terrorists declared war against De Gaulle's government, and the French-Algerian peace agreement in the Evian Accords.

In spite of the uneasiness within their ranks, the OAS terrorists were able to prolong a spectacular campaign of violence. On 21-26 March, the

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31. It should be pointed out that the Ex-President of GPRA, Ferhat Abbas (1958-61) stated after this agreement that:

Cependant, cette première rencontre d'Evian - même sans résultat - était pour nous, une preuve de la bonne volonté du Gouvernement Français. Par ailleurs le Général avait fait libérer 6,000 prisonniers, déplacé les "chefs historiques" de L'île d'Aix au Château de Turquant, et amélioré leur régime de détention. Ferhat Abbas, Autopsie d'une Guerre, p.310. See also texts of declarations drawn up in common agreement at Evian, March 18, 1962, by the Declaration of the French Government and the FLN, El-Moudjahid, No. 91, March 19, 1962. Further information see Youcef Benkhedda's Les Accords D'Evian (Algiers: OPU, 1986).

OAS fought French troops in Algiers, Oran and Constantine, the terrorists armed with guns and bombs attacked gendarmes and other security forces at three main cities. Many Moslem and European civilians were killed and wounded by the OAS. Also, OAS gunmen invaded a private clinic in Algiers and shot the patients in their beds. Forty persons were killed, most of them Moslems, and the hospital was destroyed. (For the Algerians, this act of French atrocities was a new savage barbarism, but for the French it was only a new method for keeping their slogan "L'Algérie Française". The "pied-noir" terrorists wanted to provoke the Algerian people into carrying out reprisals which would shatter the peace and cancel the Evian Accords, and the OAS invented new forms of racial warfare; their targets were designated for "Arab hunts". During one "Arab hunt", a car filled with explosives was left in the midst of Moslem workers on Algiers docks. Sixty-two of the labourers were killed and 110 wounded, all of them Algerian Moslems. Furthermore, OAS terrorists had burned the University in Algiers library in order to destroy the future and the will of the Algerian people. It appears that tons of explosives were set off in these strategic centres and used against factories and stores until the country was totally paralysed by terrorists of the OAS, and the "pied-noir" fanatics.

In France itself, the OAS terrorists had killed the Mayor of Evian. There was also an attempt to destroy the fifth Republic by the OAS, and the fanatical warriors took aim at President De Gaulle himself. In September 1961, after he had admitted that the Algerian Sahara belonged to Algeria, a bomb failed to explode under De Gaulle's car on its way to Colombey - Les-Deux-Eglises. In August 1962, about 150 bullets were fired at the President's procession as it passed through Petit-Clamart; 10 slugs went into De Gaulle's limousine, some passing within inches of his head. De Gaulle's wife and Colonel Alain De Boissieu, De Gaulle's son-

in-law, were in the car but were not injured.[32]

It should be noted that when the leader of the OAS, Salan, was captured on April 20, 1962 in Algiers and was flown to Paris in order to face trial for insurrection against the French government, anti-OAS campaigns began in both countries. Oran police arrested 500 men on charges of being pro-OAS. At the same time, the French police made some damaging thrusts against the terrorists' organization.

In this difficult situation, the FLN faced the French-Algerian negotiation on one hand and OAS terrorism on the other hand, the Algerian nationalists were forced to negotiate with OAS for a peace settlement in Algeria. Thus, the remaining OAS members began to work for a face-saving negotiated peace with the FLN's leaders in order to secure recognition of the OAS terrorism as the representative organization of Algeria's "pied-noir" community. A "pirate" broadcast in the middle of June announced that:

...during the last few days, since the arrival of Belkacem Krim in Algeria, negotiations have taken place at Rocher-Noir (Alger) and elsewhere (Oran) involving the OAS, and the FLN, and the provisional executive.[33]

On the 17 June, the FLN and OAS leaders announced the truce agreement on cease-fire. The truce had been signed by two executives in Algiers and later in Oran and Constantine. Then the FLN organization

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32. France Under De Gaulle, edited by Robert A. Diamond (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1970), p.54.

33. Marie-Thérèse Lancelot, L'Organisation Armée Secrète, Vol. I, Chronologie, Vol. II documents, p. 51.

worked for the Algerian self-determination referendum which was going to be held on July 1, 1962, in order to achieve their own goal; independence and liberation of Algeria.

Now let us see how the Algerian people became independent from French colonialism after seven and a half years of fighting and struggling for their rights and freedom. The Algerian self-determination referendum pledged by President De Gaulle in the Evian- Accords, and the General Assembly of the United Nations, was carried out on July 1, 1962 after the "pied-noir" extremists and the OAS fanatics had ended their terrorist campaign against "L'Algérie Algérienne". On July 1, the referendum was carried by the expected overwhelming majority of the Algerian population, with only a few "pied-noir" and Algerian pro-French who supported "L'Algérie Française" registering "no" votes. The final results of the referendum were announced by the Electoral Control Commission: 5,975,581 "yes" votes; 16,534 "no" votes. Two days later, on July 3, De Gaulle declared that France recognized the independence of Algeria and French-Algerian relations would in the future be governed by the Evian-Accords.[34] After the proclamation of the new state, the French government declared that Jean-Marcel Jeanneney had been named as France's first ambassador to the new Algerian republic.

On July 5, 1962, the GPRA announced the independence of Algeria and celebrated their victory for the first time in Algerian history. Men, women and children of the new-born state were celebrating peacefully with the Algerian flag in the streets, yelling "Tahya El-Dja Zair" (long life to Algeria), "Hacha Hizeb Jebja Tehrir" (long life to the FLN), etc...After a

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34. French Affairs, No. 140, July 3, 1962, pp.1-2. (Texts of the declaration of De Gaulle proclaiming Algerian independence), taken from Documents on Algeria III.

week, the GPRA - which was to hold power in Algeria until a time when elections for a new government could be organized and held - published a statement outlining Algeria's position in the international community. Moreover, the GPRA thanked the Great Meghreb Arabs (Tunisia, Libya and Morocco), Arab and Moslem countries and the communist nations including China for their material aid and moral support for Algeria's struggle for independence and criticized the Western countries for their "hostile policies", but made clear its intention to follow a policy of unity with North Africa and the Arab world, and a policy of non-alignment and non-involvement in foreign affairs.

The GPRA reported not only to the Algerian people but also to all humanity in the world that the price of liberation and independence of Algeria was much higher in seven-and-a-half years than one and a half million "chouhada" (martyrs) killed during the Algerian revolution. After 132 years of colonial domination, Algeria emerged from a dark era of its history. Some would say that July 1962 was a month of happiness in Algeria, but for the Algerian people it was a bleak month as there were not enough doctors for the mutilated victims of the last bombs. The departing French officials had left nothing but emptiness behind them, they had destroyed and burned everything like hospitals, schools, houses, cars, libraries, telephone exchanges, power plants, government buildings; even the furniture had been burned. In Ben-Bella's speech to youth leaders at EL-Biar (Algiers), the country was a "desert" and there was an immense "vacuum" at the dawn of the Algerian independence; he said that

**Everyone remembers the situation we inherited. Everything was deserted - communication centres, "prefectures", and even the administration so vital to the country. When I entered the "prefecture" in Oran, I personally found just seven**

employees instead of the five hundred who had previously worked there. The departure of the French attained a proportion of 80 per cent, even 90 to 98 per cent in some technical services such as the highway department. And to that you must add the loss of all statistical records burned or stolen...[35]

Also, Sartre for his part blamed France for her crime, not only against humanity in Algeria but also against French history which repeated itself, and he asserted that:

Il faut dire que le joie n'est pas de mise: depuis sept ans, la France est un chien fou qui traîne une casserole à sa queue et s'épouvante chaque jour un peu plus de son propre tintamarre. Personne n'ignore aujourd'hui que nous avons ruiné, affamé, massacré un peuple de pauvres pour qu'il tombe à genoux. Il est resté debout. Mais à quel prix!,... il restait deux millions quatre cent mille Algériens dans les camps de la mort lente; nous en avons tué plus d'un million. La terre est à l'abandon, les douars sont anéantis par les bombardements, le cheptel, maigre richesse des paysans, a disparu. Après sept ans, il faudra que, l'Algérie parte à zéro: d'abord conquérir la paix, ensuite s'accrocher par l'effort le plus dur à cette misère provoquée qui sera notre cadeau de rupture. Nous n'ignorons plus rien, nous savons ce que nous avons fait: en 1945, les Parisiens criaient de joie parce qu'on les délivrait de leurs souffrances; aujourd'hui ils ont ce soulagement taciturne parce qu'on les débarrasse de leurs crimes.[36]

(b) SARTRE'S WRITINGS ON AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES DURING THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION.

Before discussing Sartre's position on the Algerian revolution

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35. Ben-Bella's speech to youth leaders at El-Riath in El-Biar, (Algiers), April 4, 1963. (Ben-Bella's Speeches published by Ministry of Information, March 29, 1964).
36. Sartre, Situations, V. p.161.

between 1960 and 1962, it will be useful to know about his writings and political activities. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Sartre wrote The Condemned of Altona in 1959 in order to show how the French Army were practising torture in Algeria, although his health was not good, according to Simone de Beauvoir. For Sartre, the year of 1960 began badly with the death on January 4 of his opponent Albert Camus. According to Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre spend the evening with her reminiscing about Camus, particularly in terms of their early comradeship before the arguments and estrangement. On January 7, Sartre wrote an article about the historical and philosophical writings of Camus in France-Observateur. It was also the year notable for the publication of Sartre's second major philosophical work, Critique of Dialectical Reason after his main book Being and Nothingness, in 1943. Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason emerged from the reconsideration of Marxism that he had begun early in the 1950s. By 1956 he had been converted to the dialectical method and was attempting to reconcile it with his basic existentialism, as I have discussed in Chapter One. However, two contemporary intellectuals of high standing, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Raymond Aron, subsequently devoted a series of lectures to discussions of Sartre's work. Sartre had promised to write a second volume of the Critique of Dialectical Reason, but it never appeared, as he said at the end of Being and Nothingness. He also claimed that he was going to write a book on "Ethics" and did not. In his preface to the new edition of Paul Nizan's book Aden-Arabie (1960), Sartre addressed himself to the younger generation, incorporating such phrases as "In a society which reserves its women for the old and the rich...",[37] and attacked the left's resignation and acquiescence in 1958. In this preface, Sartre wrote his

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37. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, p.728.



self-criticism concerning the emergence of the new movement, as he stressed later in one of his interviews:

**La jeunesse est la seule qui a répondu à la mystification comme il le fallait, c'est - à - dire par la violence...Pour moi, les seuls vrais hommes de gauche en France aujourd'hui se trouvent parmi ceux qui ont vingt ans.[38]**

As might be expected after this declaration, it was natural for Sartre to join forces with the signatories who pledged themselves to civil disobedience in the "Manifesto of the 121". (As will be seen later in this section).

Between February and March 1960, Sartre visited Cuba with Simone de Beauvoir. He was much impressed with the spontaneity and undogmatic nature of the Cuban revolution and in his discussion with students at the University of Havana, he compared the Cuban revolution, which was in its honeymoon period, favourably with the French and Russian revolutions. Further, in Havana, he and Simone de Beauvoir were received by President Fidel Castro who introduced a talk by Sartre on Cuban television. Castro told viewers that he was their friend. On the way back to France there was a controversial press conference in New York. When Sartre returned to Paris, a series of sixteen articles appeared in France-Soir (June 28-July 15) entitled "Ouragan sur le sucre: un grand reportage a cuba de Jean-Paul Sartre sur Fidel Castro", (Storm over Sugar: A Report on Fidel Castro from Cuba by Jean-Paul Sartre), and later on September, Le Monde wrote "M. Jean-Paul Sartre dresse un parallèle entre cuba et l'Algérie" (M. Jean-Paul Sartre draws a parallel between Cuba and Algeria).

As Sartre became a political thinker, he attended a reception given by Khrushchev at the Soviet Embassy in Paris. In May 1960, Sartre went to Yugoslavia, accepting an invitation from the writers' union where he was

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**38. Sartre interview with Vérité-Liberté, August 7, 1960.**

received by Marshal Tito and gave a talk at Belgrade University. But Algeria still continued to dominate his political life and on June 17, Sartre appeared as a defence witness at the trial of Georges Arnaud, a left-wing journalist, who had written a report of an illegal meeting about the Algerian revolution arranged by the Francis Jeanson network. Sartre denounced the Algerian War and the repression in France: "**Nous n'avons plus d'autres tribunes que les tribunaux**".[39]

When Sartre went to Cuba he met Brazilian friends who said that if he paid a visit to Brazil, he could combat the French government propaganda about Algeria and render a service to the left.[40] In November 1960, Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir visited Brazil, where they spent two months. Sartre made numerous speeches on the Algerian and Cuban revolutions. The students of the University of Sao Paulo had formed a "**Sartre society**" in honour of his name and in Rio de Janeiro both Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were given the rank of honorary citizens.

In France itself, Francis Jeanson was due to be tried by a military tribunal. Sartre had promised to make a surprise appearance from Brazil and he sent back a statement of support for the Jeanson network. Sartre's statement, confirming his "**total solidarity**" with Jeanson's actions, and defying the authorities to bring proceedings against himself was read in the Court. Sartre declared that:

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39. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, Les Écrits des Sartre, p. 359.

40. Indeed when the President of GPRA, Ben Khedda visited Brazil in the autumn of 1961, he was struck by the services Sartre had rendered to the Algerian problem. See Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 552.

Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait dans ce domaine des tâches nobles et des tâches vulgaires, des activités réservées aux intellectuels et d'autres indignes d'eux. Les professeurs de la Sorbonne, pendant la Résistance, n'hésitaient pas à transmettre des plis et à faire des liaisons. Si Jeanson m'avait demandé de porter des valises ou d'héberger des militants Algériens, et que j'aie pu le faire sans risque pour eux, je l'aurais fait sans hésitation. Il faut, je crois, que ces choses soient dites: car le moment approche où chacun devra prendre ses responsabilités.[41]

The year 1961 began with violence and terrorism by the OAS in both Algeria and France. Sartre himself was threatened twice by French terrorist organizations. Also, there were the deaths of Sartre's two friends with whom he felt great intellectual sympathy - Merleau-Ponty and Frantz Fanon. In July, Sartre went to Rome and wrote an article "Merleau-Ponty Alive" which appeared in Les Temps Modernes in October. During his stay in Rome, Sartre met Fanon, who discussed his book The Wretched of the Earth with Sartre for the last time. The preface, which was written for Fanon was the most violent text Sartre ever wrote. In his preface Sartre proclaimed his solidarity with the Algerian people and also with the struggle of all colonial people in the Third World. Ironically, later in Algiers, Fanon's widow had Sartre's preface deleted from the 1968 edition because she disagreed with his stand on the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. In November Sartre took part in a silent protest against the violent repression of the demonstration by Algerian workers in Paris on October 17, and attended a large meeting on the Algerian issue in Rome on December 13 organized by the FLN representatives and the Italian Left-wing. For his political writings on the Algerian revolution, Sartre received "The Omega Prize" in Milan, which had been awarded in recognition of this work and his struggle against the Algerian War.

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41. Francis Jeanson, Sartre dans sa Vie, p. 217.

For Sartre, the year 1962 opened with a second bomb attack on his flat by OAS terrorists (as will be seen later). Also, in January, he gave evidence for the defence in the trial of the Abbé Robert Davezies, who was prosecuted for helping FLN members. Sartre's political activities continued to revolve around anti-Fascist meetings and support for Algerian resistance movements. On February 13, he participated in a demonstration against OAS terrorism. On March 14, he was elected Vice-President of the "Congrès de la Communauté Européenne des Écrivains" (COMES).

On the declaration of the cease-fire in Algeria on March 18, Sartre wrote an article for Les Temps Modernes, with the title "Les somnambules" (The Sleep Walkers), in which he described the bitter disillusionment of the peace, and contrasted it with the liberation of 1945, when the French people felt joy at the deliverance from their sufferings. Now they felt relief because they were getting rid of their crimes in Algeria. Also, in this article, Sartre called upon the French left to stand against any attempt by OAS terrorists to sabotage the agreements, and to struggle against the threat of fascism in France. Before the announcement of Algerian independence, Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir went to Russia and Poland. In Moscow, Sartre was received by Premier Khrushchev and had discussions with Russian writers who wanted him to take part in a "Peace Congress" which was to be held in Moscow from 9 to 14 July, to which they were inviting intellectuals from all over the world. On July 9, Sartre returned to Moscow for the "Peace Conference" and made a speech on "The Demilitarization of Culture", pointing out how culture had been used to further party goals during the Cold War. In Autumn of 1962, Sartre wrote an article for Rinascita (in Italian) entitled "The Cold War and the Unity of Culture".

After these discussions of Sartre's writings and political activities

between 1960 and 1962, let us see first how Sartre reacted to the violence which became normal to the "pied-noir" fanatics and the OAS terrorists. Are his writings and political activities in favour of the Algerian people? Is Sartre considered by the Algerians as a militant who took part in the Algerian revolution?

It has been said elsewhere by Algerian nationalists that colonialism entered their country by violence and it had to be expelled by violence. Indeed, since November 1954, the FLN had insisted that it would not agree to stop violence and terrorism until the French recognized the FLN as the only organisation representing the Algerian people and it would not negotiate unless it was the sole Moslem spokesman. The FLN's main hope for victory was to continue the violence and terrorist attacks and to make them so costly and painful that the French would lose their determination to stay in Algeria. Certainly, this is what Algerians believe today. Defending the FLN's reasoning, Sartre said that it was hypocritical to condemn the terrorism of the FLN members because the initial and fundamental violence in the Algerian situation was colonialism, and the colonial system was based on violence: first of all by conquest, then by different forms of exploitation and oppression, and now by "pacification". But the system, according to Sartre, contained a contradiction - its profits depended on the labour of the colonial people. By its own violence, colonialism in Algeria had created a creature who understood only violence and by its intransigence it had inevitably forced him to resort to violence. In supporting the FLN's actions, Sartre argued that the methods of the FLN actually were moral if viewed in the context of revolutionary humanism. It should be pointed out that Sartre had attacked the hypocrisy of bourgeois moralism as early as his novel Nausea before the Second World War. Now the Algerian problem persuaded him of the truth of the Marxist theory that abstract moralism was the property of the

dominant class, which the oppressed could not afford, and a means of maintaining its dominance. Furthermore, Sartre was hoping that the violence of the FLN would force Europeans to do "the striptease of our humanism" and also to discover that it was "nothing but an ideology of lies, a perfect justification for pillage".[42]

Now let us examine how Sartre gradually developed his thoughts from the structure of political economy and oppression to violence. As early as in Being and Nothingness (1943), Sartre claimed that violence is a negative element of human interaction. In the French resistance, he had become aware of the defensive and constructive value of a more physical kind of violence. It might be the necessary means of defending freedom. Man is freedom; that is his dominant characteristic in Sartre's thought. From this it proceeded that man is responsible for his own identity, which is self-creation through action. It should be noted that Sartre is completely consistent with this position in the Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960), where he defined the project as free because its process is other than history, and also as responsible because there is no explanation other than its own for its actions. This is freedom and responsibility without connotation.[43]

In Being and Nothingness, Sartre explained the character of oppression and the reaction to it. He asserted that oppression is the look of the other, as he wrote:

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42. Sartre, quoted in Le Monde, December 13, 1969, p.15.

43. Indeed Hazel Barnes, commenting on Sartre's philosophical thoughts said that his political and philosophical writings are clear and consistent from the starting point to his later development. But commentators made his thoughts ambiguous. (Private letter from Hazel Barnes, June 14, 1986).

The "master", the "Feudal lord", the "bourgeois" the "capitalist" all appear not only as powerful people who command, but in addition and above all things; that is, as those who are outside the oppressed community and for whom this community exists. It is therefore for them in their freedom that the reality of the oppressed class is going to exist. They cause it to be born by their look.[44]

This is a basic existentialist point of view in which the oppressed accepts the judgement of the other, and agrees to oppression in an active sense. In destroying this oppression, the oppressed must find the will to fight back, and each oppressed person must recognize his condition and move to change it "... the oppressed class by revolution or by a sudden increase of its power posits itself as 'they-who-look-at' in the face of members of the oppressing class".[45]

But later in comparing Sartre's plays The Flies (1943) and The Devil and the Good Lord (1951), Simone de Beauvoir observed that:

In 1944, Sartre thought every situation could be transcended by a subjective movement, he knew in 1951 that the circumstances sometimes steal our transcendence: against them there is no individual salvation possible, but only collective struggle.[46]

However, it should be noted, as "Matérialisme et la Révolution" testified, that Sartre's change had come at least as early as 1946, when he declared that:

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44. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p.544.

45. Ibid, p. 544.

46. Quoted in R. Pierce, Contemporary French Political Thought (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 181.

Mais le révolutionnaire lui-même...se défie de la liberté. Et il a raison. Les prophètes n'ont jamais manqué, qui lui ont annoncé qu'il était libre: et c'est chaque fois pour le duper...Elles se réduisaient toutes à une certaine liberté intérieure que l'homme pourrait conserver en n'importe quelle situation. Cette liberté intérieure est une pure mystification idéaliste...[47].

The development of Sartre's political writings on the social and economic structure of the human being took place after the Second World War. Two plays, Dirty Hands (1948) and especially The Devil and the Good Lord (1951), Sartre made it the basis of his conviction that the struggle for a society of freedom would necessarily entail dirtying one's hands with violence, as the protagonist stressed at the close of the latter play:

...I take command against my will, but I will not release it. Believe me, if there is a chance of winning this war, I will win it. Proclaim immediately that any soldier who tries to desert will be hung. Tonight I want a complete account of the troops, the arms and the supplies; you are responsible for everything. We will be sure of victory when your men are more afraid of me than of the enemy...So the reign of men begins. Fine start. Alright. Nasty, I will be executioner and butcher...Don't be afraid, I will not flinch. I will terrify them since there is no other way to obey for me, I will stay alone with this empty sky over my head, since I have no other way to be with everyone. There is the war to make and I shall make it.[48]

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47. Sartre, Situations, III, p. 196.

48. Sartre, The Devil and the Good Lord. Translated by S. and G. Leeson (New York: Knopf, 1960), p. 282.



In Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr (1952) Sartre represented Genet's life beyond failure and triumph. He described the death of Genet the child and the emergence of the Genet who wanted to become a thief, in order to look for love and property. It appears at first sight that this attitude is paradoxical. However, Sartre's discussion of this attitude is explanatory: it reflects the development of his thought in general and on violence in particular. According to Sartre, Genet wanted to steal in order to be, but stealing led him to lose his freedom. He was jailed many times, and the last time he was condemned to life imprisonment. Although, Genet was a revolutionary, he loved the French social order with a hate-filled and exasperated love.[49] Sartre describes Genet as saying that:

I do not exactly reflect on the owner of the place, but all my gestures evoke him...I bathe in the idea of property when I rob the property. I recreate the absent owner. He exists not face to face with me but all around me. He is a fluid element which I breathe, which enters into me, which swells my lungs.[50]

Sartre's first writing and most important contribution on Algeria was "Le colonialisme est un système". In adapting Marxist theory, Sartre argued that the colonial system in Algeria was based not only on the exclusion but also on the "super-exploitation" of the native population, because the "pied-noir" in Algeria were able to exploit the Moslem workers to a much greater degree, by paying them very low wages. In concluding his essay, Sartre assumed that the profits of colonial capitalism and the prosperity of the "pied-noir" was dependent on the continued misery and

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49. See more information about Saint Genet in author's M.Litt. Thesis, Jean-Paul Sartre's Conception of Bad Faith (Glasgow University, 1985).

50. Sartre, Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr, p. 244.

subjugation of the native people. He responded to the colonial reformers, saying:

...Oui, le Fellah (small cultivator) meurt de faim, oui, il manque de tout, de terres, de travail et d'instruction; oui, les maladies l'accablent; oui, l'état présent en Algérie est comparable aux pires misères d'Extrême - Orient. Et pourtant il est impossible de commencer par les transformations économiques parce que la misère et le désespoir des Algériens sont l'effet direct et nécessaire du colonialisme et qu'on ne les supprimera jamais tant que le colonialisme durera.[51]

It should be pointed out that the only solution Sartre offered in 1956 to the problem of injustice and suppression in Algeria was the total abolition of the system. This meant independence for Algeria.

In The Condemned of Altona (1959), he described the character Frantz as France, who had directed the torture of prisoners in the Second World War, and used it to appeal to the conscience of France, which had allowed the torture of Algerian people by the French Army.

When Sartre was asked what particular emotion he wished to convey in "Altona", he said the feeling of the ambiguity of our age. Morals, politics-nothing is simple any more. There are some acts, however, which are unacceptable. Sartre ended his play with a direct address to the French people, in Frantz's "best speech for the defence":

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51. Sartre, "Le Colonialisme est un Système", Les Temps Modernes, No. 123, 1956, p. 1381.

The century would have been a good one if man had not been struck down by his cruel, immemorial enemy, by the flesh-eating species which had vowed his destruction, by the hairless, malignant beast - by man. The beast was hiding, we surprised his look suddenly in the depths of our neighbour's eyes. Then we struck - legitimate self-defence. I surprised the beast. I struck, a man fell. In his dying eyes I saw the beast still alive, myself...From whom, from what do I find this dull rancid taste in my mouth? From man? From the beast? From myself? It is the taste of the century...The century is a woman in labour. Will you condemn your mother? Answer!...The thirtieth century no longer replies. Perhaps there will be no more centuries after ours. Perhaps a bomb will blow out all the lights. Everything will be dead: yes, judges, time. Night. Oh, Tribunal of the Night, I, Frantz von Gerlach, here in this room, have taken the century upon my shoulders and have said, I will answer for it. This day and for ever. What do you say?[52]

From this passage one can see that the "you" in the last sentence is not only each one of us but all of us, and we might call it the look of history. Later, in one of his interviews, Sartre said that:

I wanted the spectator to feel himself to some degree in the presence of this tribunal...Or, quite simply, in the presence of centuries to come.[53]

Also, it may well seem in the quotation that another meaning of that "Beast" which is inside us, is oneself and which therefore sets up an objective situation in which we find ourselves trapped.

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52. Sartre, The Condemned of Altona, pp.222-3.

53. Sartre said this in an interview with representatives of L'Express. Translated by Richard Seaver in Evergreen Review, January-February 1960, pp. 143-4.

In the Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960), Sartre's explanation is more powerful on ground which he personally has explored, particularly in his section on the group minds locked in conflict in Algeria, as he stated:

When we read in such and such a contemporary sociological work that the impoverishment, such as the liquidation of the social structures of the Muslim community, is the necessary result of the contact between two defined societies, of which one is backward, feudal and agricultural, and the other is industrialized, the intelligibility and the necessity of this type of determination are missing...the contact of two societies, these rational beings, is quite incapable of producing anything outside the singular contacts of the individuals who compose them...in fact, it must be said that the contact of the industrial society and the agricultural society was made by the soldiers of Bugeaud, by the atrocious massacres of which they were guilty...all the relations between the colonizers and the colonized through the colonial system are realizations of those fixed characters "practico-inertes" introduced and defined by their common action.[54]

Ultimately, history is intelligible only because it is made by men and men in this creative world are comprehensible to Sartre in the words he used to explain human consciousness in his main first work, Being and Nothingness, and the dynamics of the group cohesion in his second work, Critique of Dialectical Reason. In the latter work, Sartre discussed several points of interpersonal struggle as the war of freedom against itself; for instance, he said that: ...the only violence conceivable is that of liberty against liberty by the mediation of inorganic matter.[55] This appeared either in personal life, through Bad Faith, or in social analysis, through the reification of history.

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54. Sartre, Critique of Dialectical Reason, pp. 673-4.

55. Ibid, p. 689.

First let us discuss how Sartre reacted to the Algerian War which took place in both Algeria and France, by acting and defending in favour of the Algerians' struggle. Since De Gaulle's plan of granting a cease-fire and self-determination to the Algerian people in September 1958, Algeria still had neither peace nor self-determination until July 5, 1962. Worse, France itself resounded to the exploding bombs of the OAS. Thus, the war posed a threat to French society and to the political system. The French government discovered Jeanson's network and arrested all his members in February 1960. The score of arrests did not include the leader, Francis Jeanson, and did not stop the movement's activities in aiding and recruiting new members. In April the French authorities were unable to prevent Jeanson from holding a clandestine press conference in Paris, which was reported in the popular daily newspaper Paris-Press under the title "Les étranges confidences du 'Professeur Jeanson'".

In early September 1960, the trial of the Jeanson network opened. The day before the trial started a "Déclaration sur le droit à l'insoumission dans la guerre d'Algérie", (Declaration of the Right of Draft Evasion in the Algerian War) appeared. Signed originally by 121 intellectuals it was more commonly known as "Le Manifeste des 121" (The Manifesto of the 121). Defending the Algerian people, the intellectuals asserted that:

- Nous respectons et jugeons justifié le refus de prendre les armes contre le peuple Algérien.
- Nous respectons et jugeons justifiée la conduite des Français qui estiment de leur devoir d'apporter aide et protection aux Algériens opprimés au nom du peuple Français.
- la cause de peuple Algérien, qui contribue de façon décisive à ruiner le système colonial, est la cause de tous les hommes libres.[56]

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56. François Maspero (ed), Le Droit à L'insoumission: "Le Dossier des 121" (Paris: François Maspero, 1961), p. 18.

Among the original signatories of the declaration were the staff of Les Temps Modernes, led by the director, Sartre, Marcel Péju, and Simone de Beauvoir; the anti-colonialist militant, Daniel Guérin; the surrealist poets, Michel Leiris, and Florence Malraux (the daughter of De Gaulle's Minister of Culture, André Malraux). And later one hundred and twenty-four other intellectuals added their signatures to consolidate the position of the French left. These included the novelist, Michel Butor, the sociologist, Maxime Rodinson and Clara Malraux, the former wife of the Minister of Culture.[57] It might be surprising to see a few intellectuals become pro-Algerian, disobedient to the State, and against De Gaulle's Algerian policies. But what was the reaction of the French authorities toward these signatures?

As might be expected the reaction of the government to this declaration was swift. On September 28th a Cabinet communiqué announced the determination of De Gaulle's Prime Minister, Michel Debré to strengthen the State's disciplinary powers over "the few agents who favour refusal of military service or desertion", and also to forbid the signatories from appearing in future on the government-controlled radio and television services, and in state-subsidized theatres. One of the original signatories, Robert Barrat, the Catholic journalist, was imprisoned for two weeks because the police found about 170 copies in his office. A further decree promised action against officials, writers, professors, teachers, artists, journalists, and public or municipal servants among the signatories. There were also a series of police raids on the office of newspapers and publishers, including those of France-Observateur, L'Express, Les Temps Modernes, Vérité-Liberté, and Esprit, and five journalists were arrested.

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57. Ibid, p. 19.

It seemed that the "Manifesto of the 121" put the government in a dilemma. Although the State was against the manifesto, they took a middle way and they ignored some and singled out others for punishment, mainly those whom they believed to be the ringleaders, in order to avoid the anger of the friends of "L'Algérie Française". Indeed on October 3, 1960, the supporters of "L'Algérie Française" organized a huge demonstration against the "Manifesto of the 121". From 6 thousand to 8 thousand members of veterans' organizations marched to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris in protest against those who had signed the manifesto in favour of the Algerian people. Before marching, they "gave silent tribute to the dead, both civilian and military, who fell under the blows of the FLN",<sup>[58]</sup> and also to "to protest at the summons to treason".<sup>[59]</sup> Most of the demonstrators were shouting and insulting the signatories, as they were shouting:

"Fu-si-llez-Jean-Paul-Sartre" (Shoot-Jean-Paul-Sartre)  
"Al-gé-Rie-Fran-çaise" (French-Al-ger-ia!)  
"Li-bé-rez-La-gai-larde" (Lib-er-ate-La-Gaillarde)  
"Sa-Lan-Au-Pou-voir" (Po-wer-to-Sa-lan).<sup>[60]</sup>

Later Sartre asserted that:

Yes, at that time...the French government wanted to prosecute me for having signed the manifesto like the hundred and twenty other signatories.<sup>[61]</sup>

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58. Annie Cohen-Solal, Sartre: A Life, p. 426.

59. Ibid, p. 426.

60. Ibid, p. 426.

61. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p. 369.

Although Sartre claimed that he never belonged to any pro-Algerian organizations, he acted by himself in relation to his theories and his own political beliefs, and it was natural for him to join forces with the signatories who pledged themselves to civil disobedience in the "Manifesto of the 121". He believed that: **"La gauche française doit être solidaire avec le FLN. Leur sort est d'ailleurs lié. La victoire du FLN sera la victoire de la gauche".**[62]

In the meantime, the Jeanson network's trial went forward on September 5, 1960. Nineteen French men and women, and six Algerians were accused of carrying funds and documents for the FLN and hiding Algerians wanted by the police in France. Four of the accused, including the alleged leader, Professor Jeanson, were tried in their absence as they had fled the country. The two defence lawyers were Roland Dumas, and Jacques Vergès who became in 1987 the defender of the SS man, Klaus Barbie. The accused were not charged with any acts of assault or sabotage. Thus, nothing was gained from the capture. Over six months intervened between the group's arrest and its trial which, in turn, lasted nearly a month. There was, then, time and publicity enough to force the French left to debate its actions and to condemn the Gaullist Algerian policies, and also to reveal to the "masses" the network's character. Above all, Sartre said:

**D'où l'importance exceptionnelle de ce procès. Pour la première fois, en dépit de tous les obstacles, de tous les préjugés, de toutes les prudences, des Algériens et des Français, fraternellement unis par un combat commun, se retrouvent ensemble dans le box des accusés.**[63]

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62. Sartre, interview with Vérité-Liberté, August 7, 1960.

63. Francis Jeanson, Sartre dans sa Vie, p. 217.



On September 8, Paris-Presse strongly disapproved of the appearance of the "Manifesto of the 121" and carried a front-page headline which said: "Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone Signoret and 100 others Risk Five Years in Jail".[64] Though Sartre was in Brazil, the French Embassy was instructed to let the whole world know that Sartre would be arrested when he got back to France. Later, M. Terrenoire, the Minister of Information, announced that:

Sartre has replaced Maurras and represents an anarchic and suicidal dictatorship aiming to impose itself on a bewildered and decadent intelligentsia.[65]

It should be pointed out that the French Press had been insulting Sartre vociferously for the past two months - traitor, enemy of France, etc...Most of the parties and organizations of the right-wing attacked the signatories of the "Manifesto of the 121". Sartre was the one most attacked. But when he went back to Paris, he immediately called a press conference; he explained his part in the Manifesto and gave an exposition of the present situation.

In his preface to Nizan's Aden-Anabie, Sartre described his feeling towards the Algerian problem and the political system in France. He wrote:

Nous avons crié, protesté, signé, contresigné; nous avons, selon nos habitudes de pensée, déclaré: "Il n'est pas admissible..." ou "le prolétariat n'admettra pas..." Et puis finalement nous sommes là: donc nous avons tout accepté..., nous avons appris qu'une chose: notre radicale impuissance.[66]

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64. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 562.

65. Ibid, p. 562.

66. Sartre in his preface to Paul Nizan's Aden-Arabie, p. 13-4.

Thus, Sartre characterized the emotional anguish of the intellectuals of the French left as the Algerian War settled into its sixth year with huge numbers of Algerians killed and with the constant threat of military government in France itself in the background. For these intellectuals of the left, the problem of France's colonial policy was more the problem of the French left; the Socialists had sold out and the Communists were divided. Neither Socialists nor Communists in France responded to the problem of ending this savage and senseless war which threatened to bring fascism and dictatorship into modern society. It seemed that people did not agree with their diagnosis, particularly the intellectuals of the French left. In this manner, Jean-Marie Domenach, the Catholic left-winger, wrote that: The leaders of the left must stir themselves: it is their softness, the chatty powerlessness, their divisions, which have created this void...[67]. Also, Vérité-Liberté asserted that: "The time has come to ask ourselves if, as a result of being powerless, we are not accomplices".[68] Bourdet, too, took the left to task for: "its inertia, its laziness, or rather the miserable prudence with which it had fought against this war...Perhaps it is time to think that hopes and pious motions no longer suffice".[69] Sartre was more understanding in his writing about the action taken by the clandestine Jeanson network, and he explicitly links their powerlessness to the political system:

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67. In L'Express, March 24, 1960.

68. In Vérité-Liberté, June, 1960.

69. In France-Observateur, March 3, 1960.

If in France there were valid political institutions which permitted true action on the left, then there would not be these young men (working illegally against the war). But the present system works in such a fashion that is impossible to engage in opposition.[70]

The trial of the Jeanson network took a political turn as well, with a justification in political terms for its action. As Sartre wrote in his letter to the tribunal:

...solidarity with the Algerian fighters was not only dictated to the network by noble principles or by a general will to fight oppression wherever it shows itself; it proceeded from a political analysis of the situation in France itself.[71]

It should be pointed out that it was not only Jeanson's underground which gave aid to the Algerians but there were many organizations like "Jeune Résistance" (Young Resistance) an organization of those who refuse to join the army or deserted from it, distinguished their position from that of conscientious objection in that their decision was political. A spokesman for "Young Resistance" was Maurice Maschino who was a young teacher in Morocco and had written several radical criticisms of the war in Algeria. In defending the "Young Resistance", Maschino claimed that they had: not disobeyed in order to keep their hands clean, by moralism, but to give an example and to encourage other refusals.[72]

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70. Sartre, Vérité-Liberté, July-August, 1960 and Jeanson himself, "the point of departure is the powerlessness of the left", Les Temps Modernes, April, May, 1960.
  71. Sartre's letter cited in François Maspero (ed), Le Droit à L'insoumission, "Le Dossier des 121", p. 85.
  72. Maurice Maschino, L'Engagement (Paris: François Maspero, 1961) p.21.

As might be expected, on political grounds "Young Resistance" was subject to criticism like any disobedient people in France; they were called "infantile". Domenasch said that they would stand by those who refused to serve in the army for moral reasons, but could not see their defence in political terms, as he stated that:

I approve of the youths who had, in conscience, taken the decision not to participate in the Algerian War...(but) I am hostile to any counsel which would try to move insubordination from the level of conscientious objection to the level of general political action...insubordination...can only be a political slogan if one is able, as the Bolsheviks were in 1917, to pass quickly to an insurrection. Otherwise it only reinforces the adversaries...[73]

Nevertheless, the Jeanson network, "Young Resistance", and the "Manifesto of the 121" contributed to this radicalization. In 1960 the number of youths who refused to serve greatly increased, but this did not affect the French military forces. The number of the French left who aided the FLN movement was never large, though the Algerian nationalists welcomed and gave them moral support and encouragement - a few hundred activists drawn from all organizations of the left but the arrest of Jeanson's collaborators made public opinion change its impression of the Algerian War and also pushed Sartre and Les Temps Modernes to declare publicly their support for this action and helped awaken the rest of the left. Both Sartre and Jeanson provided reasons encouraging people on the left not only to support but also to work for Algerian independence; "the victory of the FLN will be the victory of the left".

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73. Cited in François Maspero (ed), Le Droit à L'insoumission, "Le Dossier des 121", pp. 141-2.

It should be pointed out that the aid of the French left, particularly the anti-colonialist intellectuals, was never forgotten by the Algerian people. They helped by giving money, clothes, medicines and by collecting funds for the FLN both in France and Algeria, and also by hiding Algerians wanted by the army and the police. But they never participated in any of the FLN's "attentat" or in shooting the French soldiers in the name of the ALN. Most of them refused to bomb French military targets, though the FLN insisted more on "attentats" in their revolution than collecting funds and struggling outside the movement. For instance, in Algeria itself the ALN would not accept anyone as a member until he had made an "attentat" or killed French soldiers. Thus, today Algerians believe that the independence of Algeria was due neither to De Gaulle's Algerian policy nor to the support of the French left, but it was due to the struggle of the Algerian people which cost one and a half million martyrs for their cause. Perhaps they are right, because the Algerians who fought beside the French soldiers in the First and Second World Wars are never mentioned in the Western histories.[74]

As was discussed earlier, Sartre's writings and political activities in favour of the struggle of the Algerian people turned public opinion and the French government against him and threatened him with death. Indeed, on July 19, 1961 a bomb exploded in the entrance to Sartre's flat at 42

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74. Ferhat Abbas stated that "Survint la première guerre mondiale. Les Algériens y participèrent activement, le service militaire obligatoire leur ayant été imposé dès 1912. Leurs sacrifices furent encore plus grands durant la deuxième guerre mondiale". See Autopsie d'une Guerre, p. 20.

Rue Bonaparte, causing a little damage but no injuries. Certainly it was the work of the OAS, which regarded him as an important opponent of its mission to keep Algeria under French control. Sartre was expecting it, because he had received many threatening letters and anonymous telephone calls. He settled his mother in a hotel and he himself moved in temporarily with Simone de Beauvoir.

In his preface to Fanon, Sartre's most outspoken defence of violence is made in an impassioned declaration of solidarity with the Algerian fighters. He believed that the time had come and that violence was the only cure for "colonial neurosis". Also, violence was "man recreating himself"; it alone could remove the scars on his psyche made by the colonialists violence. Sartre offered another form of psychic liberation and he stressed that violence was the only way to destroy the colonial regime:

...no gentleness can efface the marks of violence; only violence itself can destroy them. The native cures himself of colonial neurosis by thrusting out the settler through force of arms. When his rage boils over, he rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself in that he himself creates his self. Far removed from his war, we consider it as a triumph of barbarism; but of its own volition it achieves, slowly but surely, the emancipation of the rebel,...when the peasant takes a gun in his hands, the old myths grow dim and the prohibitions are one by one forgotten. The rebel's weapon is the proof of his humanity...to shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time...[75]

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75. Sartre in his preface to Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth, pp. 18-9.

Because of his profound knowledge of Algerian society and of the revolution itself, Fanon's judgement of the effects of violence on the participants in the Algerian War cannot easily be dismissed. In The Wretched of the Earth, Fanon passionately presented his case for the use of violence:

**But it so happens that for the colonised people this violence, because it constitutes their only work, invests their characters with positive and creative qualities. The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upwards in reaction to the settler's violence in the beginning. The groups recognise each other and the future nation is already indivisible.[76]**

Simone de Beauvoir described in her memoirs how Sartre had become convinced of the truth of Fanon's analysis when he was in Cuba.

**He (Sartre) was in agreement with his book: a manifesto of the Third World, extreme, whole, incendiary, but also complex and subtle; he willingly agreed to preface it.[77]**

It is apparent that Fanon used the term violence in different contexts in order to describe different phases of a process, and this process in his discussion was certainly decolonization. For Fanon, decolonization would occur only through violent means, that is, the destruction of the colonial system, and also it implied the possibility of reconstructing human relations and building a new society. In this manner, it can be seen that Fanon and Sartre had the same ideas when they

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76. Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p. 73.

77. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 609.

thought that decolonization could only be achieved through the use of violence and that armed struggle would give birth to the new man. But Sartre presented the notion of violence in, The Critique of Dialectical Reason, as the absolute form of praxis. As he emphasized that the original source of all violence is French: **The violence of the insurgent is the violence of the settler, (Pied-noir), there has never been any other.**[78]

Also in his preface to Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth, Sartre asserted that this is more difficult to cure than the influence of false consciousness because it destroys the complete personality structure of the oppressed. He stressed that:

...the order is given to reduce the inhabitants of the annexed country to the level of superior monkeys in order to justify the settler's treatment of them as beasts of burden. Violence in the colonies does not only have for its aim the keeping of these enslaved men at arm's length; it seeks to dehumanize them. Everything will be done to wipe out their traditions, to substitute our language for theirs and to destroy their culture without giving them ours. Sheer physical fatigue...Starved and ill...take over his land and force him by dint of flogging to till the land for them. If he shows fight, the soldiers fire and he's a dead man; if he gives in, he degrades himself and he is no longer a man at all; shame and fear will split up his character and make his inmost self fall to pieces.[79]

Thus, Sartre examined the effects on the native - that being who is "neither man nor animal of internalized aggression, suppressed fury".[80]

Furthermore, Sartre led his compatriots to the point at which the French savages and barbarians must be aware of their crime in Algeria:

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78. Sartre, The Critique of Dialectical Reason, p. 689.

79. Sartre, in his preface to Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p. 13.

80. Ibid, p.14.



Now, which side are the savages on? Where is the barbarism? Nothing is missing, not even the tom-toms; the motor-horns beat out "Algérie Française" while the Europeans burn Moslems alive...For we, too, during the last few years, must be victims of "frontal sluggishness" since our patriots do quite a bit of assassinating of their fellow countrymen and if they are not at home, they blow up their house and their "conciergerie" (janitor). This is only a beginning...It's our turn to tread the path, step by step, which leads down to native level. But to become natives altogether, our soil must be occupied by a formerly colonized people and we must starve of hunger. This won't happen; for it's a discredited colonialism which is taking hold on us; this is the senile, arrogant master who will straddle us; here he comes, our mumbo-jumbo.[81]

Thus, it seems that there is more criticism of the French atrocities in Sartre's preface than mere confirmation of Fanon's thesis. Thus, the discovery of the torture practised by the French paratroops in Algeria is the revelation of French inhumanity. Sartre's preface to Fanon disclosed that the humanization of the colonized took place with their adoption of measures of counter-violence. However, the violence which existed in colonized Algeria was reimported into metropolitan France in the form of OAS activity, as we have seen in the first section of this chapter.

In Sartre's preface to Fanon's book we find the contrary of what constitutes the basis of Sartre's hypothesis; with their struggle, men are no more exploited, but demolish the oppression imposed on them; because of conflict the future is not predestined; those who pay are the Europeans if they resist and attach themselves to the past; the only issue which remains is solidarity with those who achieve their autonomy, they

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81. Ibid, pp. 24-5.

discover their freedom in their struggle and violence is the source of recognition. However, this increased conflict is associated with events: resistance movements disfigure Africa and Asia; the Algerian War becomes more and more cruel. Whatever the weight of silence and conscience, this war which killed one million Algerians and thousands of French becomes a real problem for the country. Opposition is expressed largely in demonstrations organized by both French and Algerians who are killed indiscriminately. According to Sartre, the bodies of Algerians were found in the Saint-Martin Canal in Paris. In October 1961, around 100,000 demonstrators protesting against these crimes, were injured by the police. The scorched earth policy in Algeria, the attacks of the OAS in metropolitan France expose the hopelessness of this colonial war which has become a civil war. In this conflict there is ferocity on both sides. As Sartre declared:

Our precious sets of values begin to moult; on closer scrutiny you won't see one that isn't stained with blood. If you are looking for an example, remember these fine words: "How generous France is!" Us, generous? What about Setif, then? And those eight years of ferocious war which have cost the lives of over a million Algerians? And the tortures?[82]

Sartre makes of this tragedy an "epic poem" in which, paradoxically, violence become of value if it liberates: everything possesses a significance when listening to the oppressed. This is the source of the adventure. As he writes that:

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82. Ibid, p.22.

Not so very long ago, the earth numbered two thousand million inhabitants: five hundred million men, and one thousand five hundred million natives. The former had the Word; the others had the use of it. Between the two there were hired kinglets, overlords and a bourgeoisie, sham from beginning to end, which served as go-betweens. In the colonies the truth stood naked, but the citizens of the mother-country preferred it with clothes on:...we would utter the words "Parthenon! Brotherhood!" and somewhere in Africa or Asia lips would open "...thenon!...therhood!..."After all, let them bawl their heads off, it relieves their feelings; dogs that bark don't bite.[83]

Sartre not only acts on behalf of the oppressed but also against degradation of his country and every citizen with the fixed idea that one must first "sweep in front of his door". As he stressed:

It is not right, my fellow-countrymen, you know very well all the crimes committed in our names, it's not at all right that you do not breathe a word about them to anyone, not even to your own soul, for fear of having to stand in judgement on yourself...Eight years of silence; what degradation! and your silence is all of no avail; today, the blinding sun of torture is at its zenith; it lights up the whole country...It is enough today for two French people to meet together for there to be a dead man between them. One dead man did I say?...France was the name of a country. We should take care that in 1961 it does not become the name of a nervous disease.[84]

Indeed, Sartre became more active in the struggle for the Algerian people. On November 18, 1961, a surprise demonstration against fascism and racism was organized, mainly by the young Communists in Paris. A crowd of about 8,000 demonstrators turned out in support, and, with

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83. Ibid, p. 7.

84. Ibid, p. 25.

Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre paraded behind a placard proclaiming "Peace in Algeria". As Simone de Beauvoir affirmed in her memoirs:

I took hold of Sartre's arm on one side and that of someone I didn't know on the other...As we marched we chanted: "Peace in Algeria - Solidarity with the Algerians - Free Ben-Bella - OAS murderers"; less frequently: "United action - hang Salan".[85]

On December 19, there was yet another anti-OAS demonstration which was banned at the last moment. The police charged at the leaders of the procession, beating up those who were carrying placards, and shocking them with tear gas. Many people were seriously hurt. Certainly, Sartre took part in this demonstration. However, it appears that Sartre took a great step forward in his position on the Algerian problem when he participated in the pro-Algerian demonstration and attacked the French terrorist activities in Algeria in his writings. But what was the reaction of the OAS to Sartre's activities? Was the price of his siding with the struggle of the Algerian people much higher?

The bombing continued against writers and leaders of the left who were considered to be anti-"L'Algérie Française". A bomb destined for Sartre's flat was placed on the wrong floor. Three days before the bomb went off, there was an explosion at about two in the morning on the corner of Sartre's building. The shirt shop was completely destroyed by a plastic bomb, but it turned out that the target had been the shop owner, an Algerian-born Frenchman - a "pied-noir" - who refused to collect funds for OAS terrorists. On January 7, 1962 another plastic bomb exploded at 42, Rue Bonaparte on the floor above Sartre's flat. The explosion

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85. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 619.

demolished both flats as well as the bedrooms on the floor above. Sartre's front door was blown off and his Norman cupboard smashed. In this terrorist act, many of Sartre's unpublished manuscripts were destroyed.[86] However, Sartre had been living in a flat on the Boulevard Saint-Germain for a month (later in the year he was to move to a tenth-floor flat at 222 Boulevard Raspail, where he stayed until 1973). When Simone de Beauvoir went next day to see how much damage had been done, one of Sartre's neighbours shouted to her: "This is what happens because of all your politics, making trouble for everyone".[87] Moreover, on the morning of 7 February, there were about ten bombings, among them an OAS terrorist attack on the Boulogne-sur-Seine home of André Malraux, Minister of Culture, whose daughter and former wife had signed the "Manifesto of the 121". Minister Malraux lived upstairs, and fortunately he was absent that day when the bomb exploded on the ground floor.

As it might be expected, in this difficult situation the French government had to protect the well-known intellectual Jean-Paul Sartre by sending a police guard after the plastic bomb exploded in his flat. Two policemen stood outside the building during the day to save Sartre's life from any terrorist attack. "We've received a request for protection on behalf of M. Jean-Paul Sartre"[88] In spite of this, the danger increased for both Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, particularly when her book Djamila Boupacha was published. This directly provoked threatening telephone calls. However, on February 1, 1962, Sartre gave an interview to France-Observateur where he asserted:

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86. Simone de Beauvoir, Tout Compte Fait, (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), pp.371-2.  
87. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 626.  
88. Ibid, p. 627.

**We must begin by persuading everyone that the anti-fascist resistance opposes us as much to the government as to the OAS. Not because, as has been said too frequently, the government is fascist, but because it is objectively placed in a situation where it favours fascism.[89]**

Perhaps Sartre here was harping on the same subject, as earlier as Jeanson claimed in April 1960: **As for the fifth Republic...we have never said and we do not think that it is identical with French fascism. We content ourselves with regarding it as the ante-chamber.[90]** It should be noted that it was exactly the kind of opposition which would hasten De Gaulle's decision to make a peace in Algeria favourable to the FLN, as Sartre said in one of his interviews: **De Gaulle, the man mandated by the army - feels his power over the country slipping away and that is the only reason he makes peace propositions to the FLN.[91]**

On February 8, 1962, another anti-OAS demonstration was hastily organized to take place at the Bastille. Sartre did not take part in this demonstration. The demonstrators were in an angry mood and they were chanting "**O-A-S. AS-SAS-SINS**". The police were nervous and charged the crowd when they tried to herd the demonstrators away from the Bastille. When the demonstrators attempted to escape into the Charonne metro station, the police tore up metal tree guards to throw at them. Eight were killed - including three women and a sixteen year old boy, and over 100 were wounded. The official sources said that the crowd had "crushed

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89. France-Observateur, February 1, 1962.

90. Jeanson in Vérité Pour, April 16, 1960.

91. Sartre in an interview in Vérité-Liberté, 3, July-August, 1960.

itself". The trade unions organized to make the funerals into a mass demonstration. On February 13, all the workers in Paris went on strike for a silent demonstration in which Sartre participated as well. A crowd of approximately 700,000 converged on the cemetery at Père-Lachaise. Simone de Beauvoir observed to herself: **"My God! How I had hated the French! I was overwhelmed by this suddenly recovered sense of brotherhood".**[92] It appeared that what surprised the French people was that the crisis of the war in Algeria had reached metropolitan France. "Algérie Française" was all but dead - killed by OAS terror. Even the supporters of "L'Algérie Française" condemned the horror of OAS terrorists. The right-wing French newspapers commented "France Wants No More of This".

In Algeria itself, the Algerian people were very relieved to see the activities of the OAS terrorists carrying the war to metropolitan France, so that the French people should experience how painful and dreadful the war was, though the violence of the terror was much greater in the Moslem area. But for the GPRA, the year 1962 was probably the most dangerous time of the whole war. In his interview with Alistair Horne, the President of the GPRA, Youcef Ben-Khedda stated that 1962 was the most dangerous time:

...because the union between the OAS and dissident French army units was creating so much provocation, in its murders and indiscriminate massacres of Muslims, and was attempting to get the Muslims to demonstrate, out of control, in Algiers. Had they succeeded there would have been an appalling massacre.[93]

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92. Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, p. 631.

93. Quoted in Alistair Horne, A Savage War of Peace, p. 507.

However, during these seven and a half years of colonial warfare the French government attempted to describe the Algerian revolution as part of a greater Communist design linked with the Eastern bloc in order to conquer the world, as Lenin expected that the road to Paris passed via Peking.[94] But the French left saw the implications of the Algerian conflict which extended beyond North Africa. Later in 1968, in "Les Communistes ont peur de la Révolution", Sartre declared:

When I returned from captivity in 1941, well, it seemed to be absolutely normal and easy to raise a resistance. I went to find people and said "We will resist these Germans...etc.", and of course the little group that we formed was completely torn apart by circumstances and disappeared. It was necessary, on the contrary, to adhere to much more important groups more concretely based. I give you this as an example of the idealist.[95]

Although Sartre's political attitude towards the Algerian revolution was in favour of the struggle of the Algerians after 1956 when he started to write on the Algerian problem in his periodical Les Temps Modernes, he did not attend the ceremony of Algerian independence either in France on July 1, 1962, or in Algeria on July 5, which was the biggest ceremony in Algerian history and never forgotten. Firstly, it appeared that Sartre was occupied with the "Peace Conference" which was held in Moscow from 9 to 14 of July where he gave a speech. Secondly, he settled down to work on his autobiography which we have seen in the first chapter.

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94. Tony Smith, "Idealism and People's War: Sartre on Algeria". Political Theory, VI, 1973, p. 446. See also Ferhat Abbas' Autopsie d'une Guerre, who said that:

Pour justifier leurs errements et leur tout incapacité à inventer le futur, ces militaires invoquerent à leur tour un autre slogan. Ils nous ont collé L'étiquette de "communistes". Ils prétendaient que le "Marxisme" menaçait L'Algérie et que le FLN était déjà acquis au totalitarisme révolutionnaire". p.307.

95. Sartre, "Les Communistes ont peur de la Révolution" (Paris: Editions John Didier, 1968), p. 40.



However, to assess Sartre's writings and his political activities in the struggle of the Algerian people for liberation and independence, it would be better to ask ourselves how and why Sartre had developed in his political writings on the Algerian War from 1956 to 1962? Did he get any benefits from standing beside the Algerians? And what was the reaction of his country towards his position on the Algerian revolution? Was he really the enemy of France for disobeying the government?

**(c) AN ASSESSMENT OF SARTRE'S WRITINGS ON THE ALGERIAN WAR.**

Since the outbreak of the Algerian revolution in November 1954, the French intellectuals had been greatly concerned with the present troubles and future conditions in Algeria. Indeed, the anti-colonialists wrote articles, books and tracts which they distributed in the streets; they spoke at meetings, signed request, marched in demonstrations, formed committees, and established a clandestine network. Further, they lamented the war, attacked the atrocities of the French Army, sought to defend various individuals from injustice, and called for negotiations to achieve a just solution in Algeria. However, the intellectuals' proposals for a just solution were no more courageous than those of politicians. The only outstanding intellectuals who spoke in favour of Algerian independence by 1955 were the leftist writers of Les Temps Modernes, France-Observateur, and Esprit. Most of them were threatened with death many times during the Algerian War. It should be pointed out that between 1954 and 1963 about thirty five books were seized, two thirds of them published by "Editions de Minuit" or "Maspero". The French government wanted the public to believe that the FLN was only a handful of terrorists and that the "last quarter of an hour" had come; peace in Algeria could be achieved

without political negotiations with the Algerian nationalists. In order to sustain these beliefs, they had to control the news.[96]

Among these anti-colonialist writers who supported the independence of Algeria in their periodical Les Temps Modernes was Sartre who provoked the French people to describe him as an enemy of France. De Gaulle himself said that Sartre one day would be swept away by civil war. Indeed, in the fifth volume of Situations, Sartre brought together thirteen pieces written between 1954 and 1963, dealing with the problems of colonialism and decolonization. These pieces were drawn from prefaces of books, polemical articles and interviews on the Algerian problem and French politics. Some of them were probably better remarked as documents and were testimonials of Sartre's courageous stand against the policies of successive French governments toward Algeria. At a time when the most of the French people and their leaders were aiming to avoid seeing the profound moral issues confronting them, Sartre's voice was raised to point out the real problem and to remind French people of their own recent experience under the Nazis. During the intervention of the Soviet Union in Hungary in 1956, Sartre certainly did not abandon his commitment to Marxism and to the left. So, it was natural for him during the Algerian War to develop his political theory and become once again the conscience and the voice of French humanism.[97]

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96. Martin Harrison, "Government and Press in France during the Algerian War", The American Political Science Review, Vol. LVIII, No. 2, June 1964, pp. 273-85.
97. See Marc Kravetz, "Sartre et la Guerre d'Algérie", Magazine Littéraire, No. 103-104, 1975, pp.58-60.

it might be considered also that Sartre had committed himself in his earlier concept of responsibility when he claimed in Being and Nothingness (1943) that the individual is responsible for himself and the whole in which he exists because "he is the one by whom it happens that there is a world".[98] and therefore his "situation is mine because it is the image of my free choice of myself",[99] and "everything that happens to me is mine."[100] Moreover, Sartre asserted more clearly the responsibility of man in general, when he wrote:

There are no accidents in life; a community event which suddenly bursts forth and involves me in it does not come from the outside. If I am mobilized in a war, this war is my war; it is my image and I deserve it. I deserve it first because I could always get out of it by suicide or by desertion; these ultimate possibilities are those which must always be present for us when there is a question of envisaging a situation. For lack of getting out of it, I have chosen it. This can be due to inertia, to cowardice in the face of public opinion, or because I prefer certain other values to the value of the refusal to join in the war. Anyway you look at it, it is a matter of a choice. This choice will be repeated later on again and again without a break until the end of the war...If therefore I have preferred war to death or to dishonour, everything takes place as if I bore the entire responsibility for this war.[101]

As it appears from this quotation, Sartre's commitment to his political

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98. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 553.

99. Ibid, p. 554.

100. Ibid, p. 554.

101. Ibid, p. 555.

theory is consistent with his writings on the Algerian revolution. In the above passage, man has chosen war, accordingly, because he has taken part in it, and further he bears the responsibility for it because, as Sartre put it:

I can no longer distinguish at present the choice which I make of myself from the choice which I make of the war...In this war which I have chosen I choose myself from day to day, and I make it mine by making myself.[102]

In Sartre's view, by accepting himself as being part of the situation of war, and by making that situation exist for him as an individual; he is responsible for that situation. As he later declared in one of his interviews:

Whenever I committed myself in one way or another to politics and carried out an action, I never abandoned the idea of freedom. On the contrary, everytime I acted I felt free. I've never belonged to a party...Take my attitude during the Algerian War, for example. That was the time at which I separated myself from the Communist Party because the party and we did not want exactly the same thing. The party did envisage the independence of Algeria but only as one possibility among others, whereas we agreed with the FLN in calling for that independence in the immediate future. We and the Communists came together again to some extent in order to try to set up an anti-OAS group.[103]

It should be noted that was the time at which it was original

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102. Ibid, p. 555.

103. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p. 367.

freedom that made Sartre at sixteen look upon colonialism as anti-human brutality, and also, as an action that destroyed men for the purpose of material interests and well being. This freedom which made him a man, made colonialism something abject. Later, when Sartre visited Brazil he gave a talk about "the freedom of the Algerian people" and he claimed that he had found the connection between freedom, his freedom, freedom as an end in itself, "and the exercise of freedom against anything that might interfere with it, that is, the action of other men".[104] It was therefore a question of presenting "the freedom of the Algerian people" as the greatest and absolute end. The war was an attempt to prevent human beings from liberating themselves.

In 1956, Sartre's political writings become involved in the Algerian War, as he distinguished in "Le Colonialisme est un Système" the wealthy Europeans in Algeria from "Je n'appelle colons ni les petits fonctionnaires, ni les ouvriers européens à la fois victimes et profiteurs innocents du régime.[105] But in 1957, he said quite shortly: "...there are neither good nor bad colonialists: there are colonialists".[106] And by 1959, he had decided that the economic exploitation of the Algerians is so intense that they can hope for no allies among the "pied-noir", as he emphasized that:

This agricultural lumpenproletariat can not even count on an alliance with least favoured Europeans: Everyone lives off him, including the "little settlers" that the great landlords exploit but who, compared to the Algerians, are still privileged.[107]

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104. Ibid, p. 368.

105. Sartre, "Le colonialisme est un système", Les Temps Modernes, No.123, 1956, p. 1372.

106. Sartre in his preface to Albert Memmi's The Colonizer and the Colonized. Translated by Howard Greenfeld (Montreal: A Condor Book, 1963), p.xxv.

107. Sartre, in Vérité Pour, June 1959.

As might be expected, every aspect of native misery in Algeria Sartre linked directly to colonial rule, as he said: "It was absolutely necessary that the misery of the Algerian increased"[108]

When Sartre recognized that the Algerian problem was not just the economic rewards as he saw it in "Le colonialisme est un système", he declared that:

Ainsi l'exploitation met l'exploiteur dans la dépendance de l'exploité. Et, sur un autre plan, cette dépendance est au coeur du racisme, c'est sa contradiction profonde et son aigre malheur: être homme, pour l'Européen d'Alger, c'est d'abord être supérieur au Musulman.

Mais si le Musulman s'affirme à son tour comme un homme, comme l'égal du Colon? En bien, le colon est entamé dans son être, il se sent diminué, dévalorisé: l'accession des "bougnoules" au monde humain, il n'en voit pas seulement les conséquences économiques, il l'abomine parce qu'elle lui annonce, sa déchéance personnelle. Dans sa fureur, il lui arrive de rêver au génocide.[109]

In addition to his writings on the social and political economy of French colonialism in Algeria, Sartre attacked the atrocities of the French Army for using torture (the word which had been familiar to the French people for seven and a half years). In "Une Victoire" (1958), Sartre condemned the French "Gestapo" for torturing the Algerian people and he reminded Frenchmen that they were in 1943 screaming in agony and pain under the Nazis. In 1958, Algerians were tortured regularly and systematically in their name. In acknowledging French hypocrisy, Sartre wrote:

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108. Ibid.

109. Sartre, "Une Victoire", Situations, V, pp.85-6.

Plongés dans la stupeur, les Français découvrent cette évidence terrible: si rien ne protège une nation contre elle-même, ni son passé, ni ses fidélités, ni ses propres lois,...[110]

It should be pointed out that in the period intervening between 1957 and 1959 much of Sartre's writing focused on the aspect of torture. In 1959, Sartre became more aware about the tortured Algerians and he developed his political thought in order to condemn French policy in Algeria and he wrote The Condemned of Altona, and the great argument of this play was "sequestration". This "sequestration" remained, however, a poor substitute for reality. But Sartre did not want to discuss the play as it might be expected, he wanted to write about French torture in Algeria as we have seen in the third chapter. He chose to set his play in Germany instead of Algeria in order to avoid any French suspicions, as he affirmed later in one of his interviews: **Yes. After all, no one is going to contradict me if I say the Nazis committed torture.**[111]

For Sartre, the hero Frantz is France in The Condemned of Altona. Of course, Sartre is not talking about Germany in his writing at all, but about his own country. So, France is a torturer. France is herself a war criminal, as guilty as any sentenced at Nuremberg. Her crime is the crime of torture. It is therefore, actually, to escape her own conscience that France has become a "séquestré". France's life would become apparent to her, which is memories of war - real memories. Indeed, truth and reality for France were torture, and the rest was unstable and camouflage. Thus, Frantz, was unable to redeem himself and he ends in suicide. One might say that Frantz was a good man because he committed suicide, as the

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110. Ibid, p. 73.

111. An interview with Jean-Paul Sartre by Orest F. Pucciani, The Tulane Drama Review, Vol. 5, 1960-61, p.14.

critics of the play thought of the authentic act which Frantz or his father can perform. Later, Sartre responded:

yes...he committed suicide. Actually the terms "good" and "bad" have no meaning in history. The more one goes along, the more feels one the "good" were "bad". It is a sort of mystification. The terms really mean nothing. There is no justice in history. Frantz (France) comes to face what he (she) has done; so does his (her) father. They have to commit suicide.[112]

In order to assess Sartre's writings on the Algerian revolution it will be better to discuss his political activities which are in favour of the Algerian people, since the fight against colonialism is a basic part of the Marxist "project". Sartre played an admirable role in the struggle against General De Gaulle and on behalf of the Algerians. Indeed, towards the end of the fifties Sartre became an anti-Gaullist, though he wrote a pro-Gaullist article in 1945 when De Gaulle visited the United States for the first time. As De Gaulle came back to power in 1958, Sartre began his attack in an article for L'Express entitled "Le Prétendant" (The Pretender). He proclaimed:

...l'Armée n'obéit qu'à elle-même et le pays obéit à l'Armée.[113]

Then, he went further, wondering:

Et s'il les avait, Charles de Gaulle, ces pouvoirs exceptionnels, qu'en ferait-il? Quels sont ses projets?...la solitude de cet homme enfermé dans sa grandeur lui interdit, en tout état de cause, de devenir le chef d'un État

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112. Ibid, pp.14-5.

113. Sartre, Situations V, p. 98.



républicain. Ou ce qui revient au même, interdit à l'État dont il sera le chef de demeurer une République.[114]

As Sartre became anti-Gaullist more than ever, he campaigned against his policies in 1958. He detested De Gaulle's notion of personal power and completely disagreed with his "grandeur". Sartre responded to the referendum of September 1958, by "no". In "Les Grenouilles qui demandent un Roi" (The Frogs Who Want a King), Sartre concluded his tirade against the return of the "constitutional monarch" with an exhortation:

Comprenons enfin qu'on ne tire pas un pays de son impuissance en confiant la toute - puissance à un seul homme..."Oui" c'est le rêve; "non" c'est le réveil. Il est temps de savoir si nous voulons nous lever ou nous coucher. (Undoubtedly, De Gaulle won a massive majority).[115]

But De Gaulle ignored him until Sartre became one of the first to sign the "Manifesto of the 121". De Gaulle started to defend his policies and blaming those who became anti-government. In Paris-Jour, (October 2, 1960), De Gaulle announced that: "Je pardonne à Voltaire, mais pas aux serviteurs de l'État". (I Forgive Voltaire, But Not Civil Servants). It should be pointed out that this Gaullist gesture of appeasement, was one of the first steps in the canonization of Sartre. But later De Gaulle thought that Sartre was a "Great Sorcerer" who will be swept away by Civil War; "we'll have to fight or rot",[116] although he had protected Sartre and put him into the category of citizens whom the law could not touch; the intellectuals.[117]

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114. Ibid, pp.99-100.

115. Ibid, p. 144.

116. Time, January 5, 1962, p.17.

117. Annie Cohen-Solal, Sartre: A Life, p. 426.

Between 1956 and 1959, one may say that Sartre was supporting the struggle of the Algerian people for their independence and liberation by writings on the outcome of the revolution. But when Francis Jeanson was perfectly aware of how desirable and useful to have the well known intellectual, Sartre, on his side, he wrote:

...l'impatience où j'étais de retrouver cet homme, de me confronter à lui de nouveau, me souffla ce bel argument: je n'avais pas "le droit" d'interposer, entre la cause que nous servions et l'un de ceux qui étaient le plus en mesure de la soutenir, je ne sais quels scrupuls qui ne regardaient que moi. Nous avons besoin de Sartre: je devais m'adresser à lui, tant pis pour moi s'il m'envoyait au diable.[118]

Indeed the intellectual was ready to move in his direction and he declared that:

"Vous savez, je suis cent pour cent d'accord avec l'action que vous poursuivez. Utilisez - moi comme vous le pourrez: j'ai des amis, aussi, qui ne demandent pas mieux que de se mettre à votre disposition; dites-moi de quoi vous avez besoin".[119]

it should be noted that between 1956 and 1959, Sartre did not have much contact with the FLN's members, only in meetings and exchanging letters with the Algerian elites. Among the Algerian elite who supported Sartre for his political writings on the Algerian revolution was M'Hamed Aoune (member of the former party PPA in 1945 and the FLN latter), poetry writer. Aoune had written personally a letter to Sartre supporting his writings and political activities on the Algerian revolution.[120] For the Algerians, Sartre on one's side meant a hundred

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118. Francis Jeanson, Sartre dans sa Vie, p. 214.

119. Ibid, p. 214.

120. M'Hamed Aoune, "La Plume et la Probité", Actualité: Algérie, No. 1159, December-January 1988, p.38.

thousand French supporters on the Algerian side. Sartre, now has developed his political theory from writings to acting on the struggle of the Algerian people. Since he offered his active support to the Jeanson network, he started to meet with the FLN representatives not only in France but also abroad. During his trip to Brazil, Sartre met the representative of the GPRA, as he said later: "Together, we discussed pro-Algerian propaganda. We were in perfect agreement".[121] Indeed later Ali Haroun, the FLN member in France confirmed that:

Dans le monde entier l'opinion publique de gauche s'émeut du Brésil où ils se trouvaient, parvient signé de Jean-Paul Sartre et Simone de Beauvoir...Un appel est lancé aux intellectuels, aux dirigeants ouvriers et étudiants "pour la sauvegarde de la dignité humaine, du droit des hommes à lutter pour leur idéal, du droit du peuple Algérien à compter sur l'aide active de tous les militants de gauche".[122]

Further, in Rio de Janeiro, Sartre insisted on the same point: Algeria...Independence. Self-determination might yet be the best means to solve the problem, but only on condition that the FLN be given real guarantees.[123] The support for the Algerian people's struggle for independence on the part of the majority of the South American population pushed even further the parallel between the Algerian and Cuban situations; Sartre added his view in Le Monde:

This is why I, a Frenchman, tell you about a national flaw we have no right to hide. If we, old Europeans want to remain

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121. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux, A Farewell to Sartre, p. 368.

122. Ali Haroun, La 7<sup>e</sup> Wilaya: La Guerre du FLN en France 1954-1962, p.342.

123. Simone de Beauvoir, Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, p. 369.

the friends to young nations, we must recover our internationalist tradition, whereas underdeveloped countries can only grow by relying on and affirming their own nationalism.[124]

On December 13, 1961, Sartre attended a meeting for Algerian independence, which had been organized by Tayeb Boulahrouf, the FLN's representative in Rome. Indeed, this meeting turned the French Press against Sartre, by insulting and described him as an enemy of France.[125] Moreover, in March 1962, Sartre gave a speech at a factory building in a room containing an audience of six thousand on "Algeria and Fascism" in Brussels.

Between 1960 and 1962, Sartre's writings and political activities on behalf of the Algerians increased greatly. Indeed the political position that he had adopted about the Algerian revolution brought him sympathisers from all over the world. At the beginning of the 1960s, in the political development and in the movements that kept developing throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, Sartre's thought was perceived as a theoretical foundation, because of his positive attitude towards the Algerian War. In his preface to Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth, Sartre proclaimed his passionate solidarity not only with Algerians but with all revolutionaries throughout the Third World and he wrote:

We know that it is not a homogeneous world; we know too that enslaved peoples are still to be found there, together with some who have achieved a simulacrum of phoney independence, others who are still fighting to attain sovereignty and others again who have obtained complete freedom but who live under the constant menace of

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124. Quoted in Le Monde, September 1, 1960.

125. Pierre Hervé, "Ce qui fait délirer Sartre". Le Nouveau Candide, December 29, 1961.

imperialist aggression. These differences are born of colonial history, in other words of oppression. Here, the mother country is satisfied to keep some feudal rulers in her pay; there, dividing and ruling she has created a native bourgeoisie, sham from beginning to end; elsewhere she has played a double game: the colony is planted with settlers and exploited at the same time...[126]

Sartre's powerful, violent essay established him as one who responded to the violence of the FLN. French colonialism entered Algeria through torture, the indiscriminate killing of people, and shooting for "fun". It had to be deported by violence. He responded to the FLN's principle:

To shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remain a dead man, and a free man...[127]

For Sartre, all the French people are exploiters and he strongly insisted:

...by this mad fury, by this bitterness and spleen, by their ever-present desire to kill us, by the permanent tensing of powerful muscles which are afraid to relax, they have become men: men because of the settlers (the French oppressor) who wants to make beasts of burden of them - because of him, and against him.[128]

Indeed by revealing this truth, Sartre identified a new reality in the world; "...in the past we made history and now it is being made of us".[129]

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126. Sartre in his preface to Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, pp.9-10.

127. Ibid, p. 19.

128. Ibid, p.15.

129. Ibid. p.23.

As might be expected, Sartre's political writings on the Algerian revolution have been the subject of many critical discussions even by the new Algerian generation. In his book, *L'Algérie en Armes*, Slimane Chikh criticized Sartre's preface to Fanon and he wrote that this atmosphere described by Sartre and which emerges from a reading of Fanon is the same as can be found in Algeria during the revolution for national liberation, at night in "maquis" around a mysterious camp fire, or in town in a clandestine cell where the execution of the colonizer and the destruction of his universe are whispered. While this atmosphere of exclusion implies per se a fundamental exclusion of the "other", the "other" is still present though excluded because he is interiorized; and finally, if the "zombies" (Algerians) change camps, this transfer is not as automatic as Sartre would seem to suggest. Furthermore, the sheer fact of reducing the other to a "zombie", or rather of limiting it to an act of negation and otherness reveals the implied presence of the "zombie" itself.[130] However, it seems that Chikh misunderstood Sartre's philosophy, particularly on the Algerian War, because Sartre developed his political writings on the Algerian revolution from the evolution of the working class and he used the terms used by the French Army like "zombies" and "rats", which are familiar to the supporters of "L'Algérie Française" to reveal its racism and barbarism.

It should be noted that when Sartre decided to commit himself to Jeanson's network in order to become anti-Gaullist; he continued his

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130. Slimane Chikh, *L'Algérie en Armes* (Paris: Economica, 1981), p.16. It should be pointed out that Slimane Chikh's father Mofdi Zekaria is a famous poet in Algeria and the Arab world. He wrote "Quassaman", the national anthem of Algeria and the author dedicated his book to his father and "Quassaman".

political activities, against the French government, until the independence of Algeria on July 5, 1962. Although the right-wing extremists against his position on the Algerian revolution, attempted to kill him, while he did not give up his support to the FLN. He took part in many political activities in favour of the Algerians. In September 1960, Sartre was one of the first signatories of the "Manifesto of the 121". In November 1961, he attended a silent demonstrations against racism and fascism, and also he participated in other anti-OAS demonstrations. On December 19, he took part in a particularly violent demonstration on the "Place de la Bastille". On February 13, 1962, he marched in a demonstration in order to protest at the police massacre that had taken place a few days earlier in the Charone Metro Station. Further, he attended different meetings in Paris and Rome and he explained his attitude towards the Algerian revolution in press conferences. He gave many talks on the freedom of the Algerian people not only in France but also abroad. Furthermore, he was one of the defence witnesses at the trials of Ben-Saddok in December 1957 and of Georges Arnaud in June 1960, and others. Thus he testified at the trials of Algerian and pro-Algerian militants and he struggled in order to build anti-war and anti-De Gaulle coalitions. Indeed "The Algerian War was his war",<sup>[131]</sup> said Cohen-Solal. As one of the defence lawyers of "Jeanson network" Roland Dumas commented twenty-five years later:

The Spanish Civil War passed Sartre by, as did the Popular Front. The Resistance? Yes, but so little...He missed all the important political events of his time except the Algerian War, which was, in a way, the meeting of a great cause and a great personality.<sup>[132]</sup>

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131. Annie Cohen-Solal, *Sartre: A Life*, p.440.

132. Quoted in *Ibid*, pp.440-1.

But the reaction of the French extremists to Sartre was anger. Since the Autumn of 1960 everyone in France, who was concerned about the Algerian revolution seemed to be taking stances, either pro-Sartrean or anti-Sartrean. As he was one of the first to sign the "Manifesto of the 121", the French people focused many of its tensions on Sartre, who served as a "scapegoat" for some people, particularly the OAS terror, and a symbolic shield for others. For the opposition, Sartre had gone too far in supporting the Algerians instead of his own people. As André Brissaud, the right-wing journalist of Le Figaro wrote:

The real France must be crushed so that there will be victory for the Sartrean France, the revolutionary idea of France that M. Jean-Paul Sartre has substituted for France, and which he prefers to France. In this Sartrean France, in this France of "thinking individuals", it is the FLN that is the true army, while the French army becomes the hated, unpardonable enemy, something like the inheritor of Hitler's army of the 1940s.[133]

Since then Sartre became "untouchable". Threatening telephone calls and letters became a daily experience, even the insulting turned out to be normal, particularly in public places. Thus, he was one of the first targets of the OAS attacks. For the OAS, to kill Sartre, meant to destroy the ambition of the French left which claimed that the victory of the FLN would be the victory of the French left. Also, the offices of his periodical, Les Temps Modernes, were attacked on May 13, 1961 by the OAS.[134] Nevertheless, the newspaper Réforme, in an article titled "Le Temps des Militants", (The Era of Militants), argued that:

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133. Le Figaro, September 30, 1960.

134. See A.A. Fatouros, "Sartre on Colonialism", World Politics, XVII, No. 4., July, 1965, pp. 703-19.



La réflexion de Sartre mérite d'être entendue...Il ne veut pas que les événements actuels le rejettent une fois de plus du côté de la gauche respectueuse: il pense que le temps de prendre des risques est venu. Il recommande au jeunes l'insoumission, il se range aux côtes des nationalistes Algériens qui luttent pour l'indépendance de leur pays. Il ne nous appartient pas de juger Jean-Paul Sartre, mais de le comprendre.<sup>[135]</sup>

In supporting freedom of speech, André Malraux said that it would be: "better to let Sartre shout 'long live FLN' in the Place de la Concorde than arrest him and embarrass ourselves."<sup>[136]</sup>

Up to this point one may say that is Sartre the enemy of France as the right-wing extremists described him? Certainly not. Firstly, he committed himself to his freedom of choice and responsibility, which is the foundation of his thought. As he asserted earlier:

When we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men...(and) when we say that man chooses himself, we do mean that everyone of us must choose himself; but by that we also mean that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men...What we choose is always the better; and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all.<sup>[137]</sup>

Indeed if France chooses to be free from the Nazi occupation she must recognize the choice of Algeria in order to be free. Secondly, Sartre described the Nazi occupation in a manner which clearly illustrates this way of thinking and reminded the French of people who were in the same situation as theirs:

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135. Réforme, October 1, 1960.

136. Quoted in Annie Cohen-Salal, Sartre: A Life, p.425.

137. Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, p.29.

Jamais nous n'avons été plus libres que sous l'occupation allemande. Nous avons perdu tous nos droits et d'abord celui de parler;...Et le choix que chacun faisait de lui - même était authentique puisqu'il se faisait en présence de la mort,...[138]

The FLN never denied the struggle of Left-wings not only in France but also the Western countries for helping the Algerians in order to obtain their freedom. Ferhat Abbas in his part stated that:

"Des hommes rompent la 'politique du silence' et désavouent...prennent partie et protestent contre la guerre menée en Algérie. Ils préconisent la négociation et la paix...Des journalistes, malgré les dangers qui pèsent sur eux, mettent leur plume au service de l'Algérie et plaident pour la décolonization".[139]

Most of the anti-colonialist intellectuals were given a job after Algerian independence. Among those intellectuals was Francis Jeanson who had a job in Algiers, as an adviser of the social sciences section in the Ministry of Education.[140] But Sartre was considered by the Algerians as one who was actively involved in the debates over decolonization and also the one who was standing beside them in their struggle not only by writing and attacking French atrocities but also by acting and participating in political events since 1956. In Algeria today most of Sartre's works have been translated from French into Arabic, particularly the work on Algeria. For instance, "Une Victoire" (A Victory) has been translated to "Our Infamy in Algeria". The title is the meaning of the whole Sartre's essay.

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138. Sartre, Situations III, p.11-2. (It should be pointed out that this quotation has been referred to in Chapter One).

139. Ferhat Abbas, Autopsie D'une Guerre, pp. 189-9.

140. Francis Jeanson, Sartre and the Problem of Morality, p.xxiii.

Between 1962 and 1964, Sartre became famous throughout the world; as the man of scandal, man of wisdom, man of freedom and the man of truth. On October 22, 1964, during the independence of Algeria, Dr. A. Osterling, a member of the Swedish Academy, made the following announcement:

The Nobel Prize has been awarded this year to the French writer Jean-Paul Sartre for his work, which, in the spirit of freedom and in the name of truth, has had a great impact on our era.[141]

But Sartre refused to accept it as he stated:

Je regrette vivement...les raisons pour lesquelles je renonce aux prix ne concernent ni l'Académie suédoise, ni le prix Nobel en lui-même, comme je l'ai expliqué dans ma lettre à l'Académie. J'y ai invoqué deux sortes de raisons: des raisons personnelles et des raisons objectives...mon refus n'est pas un acte improvisé,...[142]

At this stage of rejecting the Nobel Prize, one can draw two main reasons for Sartre's explanation to the Swedish Academy. Firstly, in refusing the Prize, Sartre was insisting on his need to remain independent, as he claimed: "L'écrivain doit donc refuser de se laisser transformer en institution..."[143] Also he thought that what was important was what the writer said, not who he was, as he affirmed that:

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141. Nobel Academy Archives, Stockholm, courtesy of Carl-Gustav Bjurström. Quoted in Annie Cohen-Salal, Sartre: A Life, p.446.

142. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, Les Écrits de Sartre: Chronologie, Bibliographie Commentée (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), p. 402.

143. Ibid, p. 403.

Je veux être lu par des gens qui ont envie de lire mes livres.  
Pas par des collectionneurs de célébrités...Un écrivain doit  
vivre dans sa vérité.[144]

Secondly, Sartre's reason for refusing the Nobel Prize was that it had been awarded in the context of the Cold War as he asserted:

...dans la situation actuelle, le prix Nobel se présente objectivement comme une distinction réservée aux écrivains de l'Ouest ou aux rebelles de l'Est...Je ne veux pas dire par là que le prix Nobel soit un prix "bourgeois",....[145]

As it appeared in the second reason Sartre would have been glad to receive the Prize during the Algerian War for:

Pendant la guerre d'Algérie, alors que nous avons signé la "déclaration des 121", j'aurais accepté le prix avec reconnaissance, parce qu'il n'aurait pas honoré que moi, mais aussi la liberté pour laquelle nous luttons. Mai cela n'a pas eu lieu et ce n'est qu' après la fin des combats que l'on me décerne le prix.[146]

Up to this point, as we have seen in this thesis, Sartre's writings and political activities on the Algerian conflict reveal that his attitude towards the Algerian War had gradually developed between 1956 and 1962, though the Algerian revolution had started earlier in November 1954.

To assess Sartre's position on the Algerian revolution it will be useful to sum up his view in the following points:

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144. Ibid, p. 405.

145. Ibid, p. 403-4.

146. Ibid, p. 403-4.

1. After the Algerian problem came to prominence in French politics in 1956, Sartre condemned France for using the nineteenth-century economic machinery of colonial exploitation. He said that the only possibility of action was to support the Algerian fight against tyranny, and also against what he called "neo-colonialist mystification". However, Sartre did become involved on the Algerian War in 1956, and he decided to be on the side of the Algerians, perhaps because of his imprisonment during the Second World War.
2. The second stage of the development of Sartre's attitude towards the Algeria revolution is seen in his writings on the torture of Algerians in 1958, revealing the truth and reminding the French of the Second World War:

...s'il suffit de quinze ans pour changer en bourreaux les victimes, c'est que l'occasion décide seul: selon l'occasion, n'importe qui, n'importe quand, deviendra victime ou bourreau.[147]

In 1959, Sartre was more aware of the torture in Algeria and had gradually developed his attitude towards the Algerian question by writing The Condemned of Altona which was designed to call attention to the torture, then being perpetrated by the French in Algeria. Indeed Sartre characterized the hero Frantz as France whose crimes were so great that they must be hidden in "madness" and so "limitless" that Sartre must expose them through images of Nazi Germany. Later Sartre claimed in one of his interviews:

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147. Sartre, "Une Victoire", Situations, V, p. 73.

But that's not the only reason. For though we are not Germans, though our problems are different from theirs under Nazism, there are very special relations between the Germans and us. We were once in exactly the same position with respect to them as the Algerians are with respect to us today.[148]

3. In writing and acting on behalf of the Algerians, Sartre declared his full support for the FLN in 1960. He was one of the first to sign the "Manifesto of the 121" and he took action by confirming his "total solidarity" with Jeanson's network, as he asserted:

Si Jeanson m'avait demandé de porter des valises ou d'héberger des militants Algériens, et que j'aie pu le faire sans risque pour eux, je l'aurais fait sans hésitation.[149]

This declaration proved that Sartre took an increasingly militant position on Algeria. From then on, he strove against French atrocities and the De Gaulle government. In this way, he put himself in danger and became one of the French terrorist's targets.

4. Towards the end of the Algerian revolution, Sartre apprehended that he was indeed fighting for the freedom of the Algerians and he perceived that his "freedom is the freedom of others", that his theory had become his practice. In defending the Algerians and attacking the French, Sartre wrote: "We are chained, humiliated, sick with fear; we are at our lowest ebb".[150]

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148. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, Sartre on Theatre, p. 255.

149. Francis Jeanson, Sartre dans sa Vie, p. 217.

150. Sartre in his preface to Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p.25.

And he went further, arguing: **On which side are the savages? On which side is barbarism?...They are now on the French side!!!**[151]

The development of Sartre's attitude towards the Algerian revolution in the early 1960s is revealed not only by his political writings but also by his actions in attending demonstrations.

5. If one assesses Sartre's attitude towards the Algerian revolution, one will find that Sartre's political writings in 1956 were concerned only with the structure of the social and political economy. But between 1957 and 1959, his writings became more involved with torture from 1960 to 1962, Sartre's writings and political activities became stronger and more violent.

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151. Ibid, p. 24.

## CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to discuss Jean-Paul Sartre's writings on the Algerian revolution. It has shown the philosopher of high intellectual standing who was actively and practically involved in the Algerian problem. In my discussion, it has been repeatedly insisted that Sartre's writings and political activities are in favour of the struggle of the Algerian people, since he committed himself to stand on their side in 1956, and strongly attacked French colonialism in Algeria, although he did not call for the complete independence of Algeria at the end of the Second World War nor did he support the FLN's actions until January 1956. Perhaps he was like all the leftist intellectuals, particularly the writers of Les Temps Modernes, who were supporting the French Communist Party and the Soviet Union after the Second World War and before the outbreak of the Algerian revolution.

As the outbreak of the Algerian revolution which started in November 1954 and the emergence of the FLN's organization have been the subject of many critical discussions, I have attempted to show logically and objectively how the organized revolution started against the oppression. Indeed the French colonialists did not understand the social and political economy of Algeria until the native population turned against them. Violence in some way must have a goal. Since the beginning of the 1950s, Algerians have believed that the only language which could be used against colonialism is violence. The use of violence will force the oppressors to recognize your existence. In defending the use of violence in the early 1960s, Sartre emphasized that violence was the only cure for "colonial neurosis" and the only way to destroy the colonial regime.

My aim in this work was to prove not only to the Algerians but



also to Left-wing people everywhere that the political writings of the French anti-colonialist intellectuals supported the struggles of the Algerian people for independence and liberation in many ways. Among them certainly was Sartre who developed his social and political freedom after the Second World War and his ideas were transformed into a new political commitment. Indeed in the development of Sartre's thought there is an important element which has alienated him from his earlier self and from his earlier political writings, this is the idea of freedom. It is this idea of freedom which prevented Sartre from joining the French Communist Party during his period of political commitment. It is, also, this freedom which has obliged him to defend the freedom of others and prevented him from becoming a determinist. This is how we must understand the development of Sartre's thought. Thus, to ignore Sartre's writings on and political activities during the Algerian revolution would be unjust, and to accept them would be to appreciate the attitude of an unusual man, as he described himself later:

Il a vécu jusqu'au bout une condition impossible: fuyant et cherchant la solitude, vivant pour mourir et mourant pour vivre, convaincu de la vanité de l'action et de sa nécessité, tentant de justifier son entreprise en lui assignant un but auquel il ne croyait pas, recherchant la totale objectivité du résultat pour la dileur dans une absolue subjectivité, voulant l'échec qu'il refusait, refusant la victoire qu'il souhaitait, voulant construire sa vie comme un destin et ne se plaisant qu'aux moments infinitésimaux qui séparent la vie de la mort...Mieux encore: il prouve que c'est cette impossibilité d'être qui est la condition de son existence et que l'homme existe parce qu'il est impossible.[1]

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1. Sartre, Situations, VI, (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp.20-1.

My conclusion is both negative and positive. It is negative in that Sartre's writings on and political activities during the Algerian revolution are dismissed, particularly by Algerian investigators who are concerned with the French intellectuals who supported their freedom. To this extent I agree with most of those who have attempted to elucidate the political writings of the French anti-colonialist intellectuals toward the struggle of the Algerian people. The victory of the FLN was the victory of the French left. In my previous discussions I have tried to show the participation of the French intellectuals who were close to Sartre in taking part on the Algerian War. On the other hand, the gradual development of Sartre's position on the Algerian revolution is totally consistent with his theory of freedom for which he had been fighting since the Second World War. It seems that he is right when he said: "Dire la Vérité. C'est le rêve de tout écrivain vieillissant".[2] However, I would like to suggest to those who wish to study the French intellectuals and the Algerian War, that they should concentrate on the attitude of the French Marxists toward the Algerian revolution.

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2. Sartre, Situations, IX, (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), p.11.

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